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Scientific Advice on Catch Quotas Is Being Challenged

Is the EU's scientific approach to the declaration of zero TAC quotas any longer fit for purpose?

Fuel Costs Will Cripple Us

Patrick Murphy, Chief Executive of the Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation calls for another public demonstration against Government neglect of the fishing industry. "We must stand up against the way the industry is being treated."

BREXIT Money Being Saved for A Rainy Day?

Well Minister, it's pouring right now in the Irish fishing industry!

All of this plus so much more inside this issue

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the fine Art of Marine Finance

by Art Kavanagh

Permanence - The Dying Talent

I don't know how many of you are familiar with the work of Brian O'Nuallain who is better known by his pen name Flann O'Brien and is regarded as one of the more important figures in Irish 20th Century Literature.

I mention him because of one particular piece of his work included in the One Man Show – "The Brother" in which the main character regales us with a poem hailing the many qualities of the Pint of Guinness referred to by its old Dublin title of "A Pint of Plain"

In the course of the poem which suggests that the "Pint of Plain" will cure almost all problems the hero states that the poem has PERMANENCE!!!!

"A Pint of Plain is yer ONLY Man"!!!!
OR IN CURRENT TIMES MAYBE "Yer only Person????"

Permanence is a feature which is a dying talent lads and the most regular example of Permanence in many of those things I deal with is LACK OF IT!!!!

I have it in dealings with the banking sector where the significance of past record, excellence of performance and clear ongoing repayment capacity has been sidelined as lenders seek to reinvent the wheel - challenge established practices and figures - question the accounts submitted by some of the most eminent accountancy firms in the country in their attempts to stress projects to extinction.

If you stare at a Statue for long enough Lads IT WILL MOVE!!!!

Then we have a Moving Statue and how much wiser are we?????

I have had a number of instances in recent months where the absence of a suitable offering from the SBCI incurred legal costs of around €5000 for fishing deals That is in addition to the higher interest rate.

The SBCI Funding is effectively Security Free up to € 500,000 but recent deals not unreasonably needed to be secured at that level. The Security is important for the Banks' Balance Sheets but only clear proof of repayment capacity will drive Loan Approval.

That involved entering the vessel on the Mercantile Marine Register with all of the paperwork involved and also delaying the Licensing Process.

Again this hardly fits the slogans being used by the Commercial Banks in their claims of supporting business. Let's hope that the Future Growth Loan Scheme is re-introduced shortly as most Fishing Projects need the 10 Year Term to be viable. There was a suggestion that it might be reintroduced in Q3. Fingers crossed.

We have an equal amount of changeability in the Licensing System in that small changes are being introduced as new staff take their places in the System.

I am a believer very much in living to rules .

Failure to do that results in a form of Anarchy as we all make our own rules and conditions.

It is important though that PERMANENCE raises its head again here and that we establish EXACTLY what is required to have a Fishing Vessel Registered and Licensed.

There have been inconsistencies in recent months which have created unforeseen difficulties.

It can be easier to be dismissive of effort, difficulty and discomfort if the effort, difficulty and discomfort is actually SOMEONE ELSE'S.

I had one demand for a change (albeit slight) in the Consent Letter from a Mortgagee where the Capacity from the Vessel which subject of the mortgage is being removed from the register.

There was no issue with the change in the wording except that the Bank Credit People and then their Legal people had to agree and the process was delayed by nearly 2 weeks while someone had to wait for everyone to agree.

This was an instance where absolutely no purpose whatsoever was served or value added to the transaction. Everyone KNEW that and when asked why - I said that the Licensing Authority is Independent so they can effectively do as they like.

It's happening everywhere Lads (not just Licensing) where people are scared out of their pants that "Something" will turn up for which someone might be blamed so they tinker with wordings which have worked for years.

If you don't finalise something you can't be blamed if something goes wrong.

The Mission Statement of the Licensing Authority for Sea Fishing Boats is to "*provide a transparent, equitable, user friendly licensing and registration system for Sea Fishing Boats and to ensure compliance with EU-determined fishing fleet capacity ceilings and reporting requirements*"

The Licensing and registration regime aims to underpin the development of a modern, safe fishing fleet that is well equipped to maximize the potential of

available catch quotas to the benefit of the vessel owners, their local communities , and the wider economy.

That's what it says on the tin lads!!! unless they have changed it.....

We talk about the value of the Seafood Sector to the national economy but without the Fishermen there IS NO SEAFOOD SECTOR.

It all starts with the CATCHING - lets never forget that.

In order to go Catching we need to be LICENSED so lets get this process streamlined.

I'm not sure how much longer I am going to be concerned with it as I try to reduce my workload.

I really like what I do but I am weary from trying to accommodate the changes which have transformed what was a super service into a ponderous process.

I now have a situation where one of the Registries has changed one of the Documents to very little benefit to anyone. Another Delay.....

It is impossible to deal with this kind of stuff lads.....

I'm not clear where you are all going with this lads but in my long Career as a Bank Manager I really valued getting documentation accurately and carefully presented.

Not sure that attracts any value now.

We will all make mistakes but care in the presentation of Documentation in my opinion is an indication of respect for those receiving it.

This should be a two way street but everyone must make their own decision on whether it is or not ????

I make my points not by way of Complaint but from a feeling of Total Frustration.

PERMANENCE is another description of CONSISTENCY which we don't have in many sectors lads. I feel obliged to explain to those who create delays to consider that every day a project is delayed results in some decent Man being unable to work.

Stay safe everyone!



Men Scoedec on a fine September morning - Photo courtesy Fintan Harrington

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Scientific Advice on Catch Quotas Is Being Challenged

Report by Tom MacSweeney

Is the EU's scientific approach to the declaration of zero TAC quotas any longer fit for purpose?

TACs (Total Allowable Catches) are based on advice from ICES, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, an intergovernmental marine science organisation, which declares its purpose as "meeting societal needs for impartial evidence on the state and sustainable use of our seas and oceans."

There has always been a degree of difference between fishermen and the scientists.

Fishermen have claimed that what they see on the fishing grounds is, often, quite a different picture to what scientists claim.

ICES advice has been criticised for basing TACS constituted on mathematical estimates of the quantity of each of stocks that could or would be caught in targeted stocks, but not making provision for other aspects of fisheries controls, including the effects of landing obligations and by-catches.

ICES says: "Our goal is to advance and share scientific understanding of marine ecosystems and the services they provide and to use this knowledge to generate state-of-the-art advice for meeting conservation, management, and sustainability goals."

Scientific advice for a zero quota is, essentially, precautionary to ensure sustainability of a stock.

ICES says it has a network of nearly 6,000 scientists from over 700 marine institutes in 20 member countries and that 2,500 scientists participate in its activities.

But, as the number of stocks on which a zero TAC has been recommended have increased each year, when recommended by the EU Commission to the annual negotiations on fish catches and fishing opportunities, this widening application of zero proposals is being questioned by the fishing industry. Zero TACs also cause problems for boats where by-catches and landing obligations clash. It can be very difficult for fishermen to observe and conform with them, thus increasing the possibility of being accused of breaking fishery laws.

John Lynch, Chief Executive of the Irish South and East Fishermen's Organisation, has highlighted the situation and also cuts proposed for haddock in the Irish Sea.

"I would not be one to argue with advice because usually, they are reasonably accurate, but in this situation of a 31 per cent cut being recommended, I do not believe this advice to be accurate or correct because

there is no vessel fishing in the Celtic Sea, no matter what type of fishing they are doing, that doesn't have some haddock in their catches and log book data will easily prove that. So with that amount of fish on the ground and it is good-sized fish, it is hard to believe that the advice is for a cut of such magnitude, 31 per cent. I would definitely argue that advice. This is really a disaster for Irish fishermen because we depend on this stock. It is hard to understand this advice."

In relation to scientific recommendations on zero catches in different species he says: "If a zero becomes a zero TAC advice on a species, it can't work when you have a landing obligation. If you have a by-catch you have to bring it ashore. If you've no quota, then you're in trouble. If you don't bring it ashore you're in trouble."

"Something needs to be done to avert this zero TAC advice coming out for different stocks annually."

You can read more about John Lynch's concern in the CEOs monthly feature on Page 8

In other aspects of scientific basis for quota cuts and allocations, Norway and the Faroe Islands have ignored the EU TAC advisory system and set their own autonomous quotas of mackerel catches for the three years – 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Sean O'Donoghue, CEO of Killybegs Fishermen's Organisations says this is having an effect on the stock "and it is likely we will be seeing another reduction in the scientific advice" for what EU boats will be allowed catch.

"If we did not have this 'carry on,' from our own figures that we have done, instead of a decrease, we would be looking at an increase in the mackerel stock."

Effectively, Norway and the Faroes are trying to establish their own 'track record' to justify what they can catch, contrary to EU scientific advice. That tactic was used by them before, according to Mr. O'Donoghue, when blue whiting allocations were being made and the EU Commission failed to stop it. "The EU allowed that to happen and Norway and Faroes are trying to do the same again with mackerel and the EU has allowed this to drag on for the past three years."

The Commission appears to be changing its attitude, after strong protests by Ireland, which highlighted.

"This 'carry on' by Norway and the Faroes has got to be stopped," said the KFO Chief Executive.

Read more from Sean O'Donoghue in the CEOs monthly feature on Page 8



An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport



Now Open Watch Officer's in the Irish Coast Guard at its Marine Rescue Coordination Centres.

The Irish Coast Guard (IRCG), a Division of the Department of Transport has vacancies for Watch Officers at its three Marine Rescue Coordination Centres in Dublin, Valentia, Co. Kerry and Malin Head, Co. Donegal. The IRCG provides a nationwide maritime emergency service as well as a variety of services to shipping and other government agencies.

Watch Officers are responsible for watch-keeping on the emergency communications systems, acting as Search and Rescue Mission Coordinators, Marine Alert and Notification Officers, as well as tasking and co-ordination of Coast Guard aviation

operations. They process marine communication traffic, monitor vessel traffic separation, coordinate responses to maritime casualty and pollution incidents and provide Coast Guard support for the other emergency services.

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West Cork Shellfish Company Launches Ireland's First Crab Pate with Support from BIM

A West Cork shellfish company has launched Ireland's first crab pate following an upgrading of its factory with support of a €793,281 Brexit Processing Capital Support Scheme grant, implemented by Bord Iaschaigh Mhara (BIM).



Tommy Murphy, Richard Murphy, Carol Harrington, Ryan Murphy and Pat Murphy.

Shellfish Ireland, based in Castletownbere, says the investment in the business will help the company develop other fish products from what was previously waste. This will increase efficiency and cut down the cost of disposal.

Shellfish Ireland CEO, Carol Harrington, said the grant has been used to purchase new equipment for processing shellfish and to upgrade cold storage facilities.

"This upgrading means we can focus on more value-added products and we are delighted to have recently launched Ireland's first crab pate which is listed in Dunnes and Musgraves stores," she said.

The Brexit Processing Capital Support Scheme brings to over €1 million in grants Shellfish Ireland has secured through BIM since 2021.

"We are focusing very much on value added products," said Carol. "The machines we were able to buy with the support of the Brexit Processing Capital Support Scheme will increase our yield from processing crab, making us more competitive on the domestic and export markets. Some of this machinery will allow us process all parts of the crab including the body, claws, legs and shell. This maximises the output of the crab and helps us mix different crab meats for various products."

The new refrigeration system will speed up the freezing time during processing, enhancing the quality of the product as well as improving energy efficiency.

According to Carol, the investment adds value to the crab and shrimp landings in Ireland.

"All the raw material is landed into local ports around the Irish coast. The majority of the crab and shrimp purchased by Shellfish Ireland is from small to medium boats and family fishing enterprises, so we are supporting this industry in rural Ireland."

The investment will significantly add to the efficiency of the business, as it will be able to convert what was previously waste – with a cost of disposal – into value added raw material for secondary processing into fish food.

Shellfish Ireland products are BRC Grade A certified and are available in all five major supermarket retailers. They also sell into restaurants and hotels. On the export market it sells in Europe and Asia.

Shellfish Ireland was first established in Castletownbere in 1987 by two young fishermen, Richard Murphy and Peter O'Sullivan Greene.

From small beginnings Shellfish Ireland has grown to become one of the largest employers in the area, with more than 130 people working there today. The Murphys are still very much involved with 95-year-old Pat Murphy – Richard's dad – chair of the board of Shellfish Ireland. Incredibly for his age he is active in the business and chairs meetings. Richard's son, Ryan, also works for the company, making it three generations involved.

Carol took redundancy from AIB in 2013 and a year later she was approached by Shellfish Ireland and worked initially as financial controller. She was appointed CEO in 2016 and following Peter's retirement in 2019, GW Biggs group came on board.

Oireachtas Islands Committee Goes Live – From an Island!

Marine Times Reporter

Climate neutrality and biodiversity on the islands, housing and sustaining communities on offshore Islands and eHealth and living longer on islands was discussed at what was described as a "historic meeting" of the Joint Committee on Social Protection, Community and Rural Development and the Islands held on Arranmore Island, Donegal, on Friday September 22.



It was the first official Oireachtas business to be held on an offshore island and, according to the Committee Chairman, Deputy Denis Naughten, "signified the importance of involving all the people of Ireland in the democratic process."

At last, it seemed, the islands had been recognised as being part of Ireland, according to some observers.

Despite some cynicism about the publicity involved for the meeting and on-going difficulties in pursuing island policies over many years, there was a welcome for the meeting being held on the island.

The Committee on Social Protection, Community and Rural Development and the Islands is tasked with scrutinising the work of the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Rural and Community Development and their respective agencies. It also has a special remit to consider matters of relevance to Ireland's offshore islands.

Committee meetings have been held outside the Leinster House before, notably as part of a series of debates before Ireland voted on acceptance of the Lisbon Treaty, but advances in telecommunications infrastructure and rural communications enabled proceedings to be conducted and streamed live from an offshore island for the very first time from Árainn Mhór.

The Committee's meeting covered the three strands outlined above.

Deputy Naughten said the live broadcast of Oireachtas business being conducted outside Dublin for the first time showed "the huge potential that broadband and technology have in bringing democracy and the operations of Leinster House to the people right across this country. It is significant that a national initiative is for the first time being conducted on an offshore island rather than in another part of the country."

The meeting can be watched on the House of the Oireachtas website and is also available on You Tube.

BIM New Fishermen Scheme

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Fisheries Groups and Islands Action Plan

At the annual meeting of Comhhdáil Oileán na hEireann on Inishturk last month, Seamus Bonner, Secretary of IIMRO asked how the fisheries groups could input into the action plan for the islands to strengthen the fisheries/marine section.

This new islands policy document, the first since 1996, is a 10-year policy supported by a number of action plans.

There is scant mention of the maritime and fisheries sectors – a hugely noticeable omission for an islands' action plan.

Aodán Mac an Mhíle, Principal Officer of the Islands Section at the Department of Rural and Community Development, responded to the question raised about input by fisheries groups that this could be addressed through a Monitoring Committee for island policy.

This is to include island representatives and will be convened before the end of October, the Comhhdáil AGM was told.

The Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation is the representative organisation for marine resources on the offshore islands and a recognised EU Producer Organisation.

Marine Institute to Host 12th Shellfish Safety Workshop

The Marine Institute in conjunction with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI), Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA), Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) and Irish Farmers Association Aquaculture (IFA) will host a Shellfish Safety Workshop at its headquarters in Rinville, County Galway, on the 17th October 2023.

This will be the 12th in the series of workshops which commenced in 2000, with the last one held in October 2019.

Registration is open to anyone working in the areas of shellfish aquaculture and food safety. The workshop welcomes participation from the shellfish industry, regulators, scientists, and researchers.

When describing the event, Dave Clarke, Shellfish Safety Manager at the Marine Institute said, "This is a fantastic opportunity for those working in the shellfish sector to meet and discuss the current issues, latest trends and patterns, and the latest research advances in the field."

To attend the workshop register online at eventbrite.ie (search for Shellfish Safety Workshop)

Ambitious Skills Strategy from BIM to Support Seafood Industry into the Future

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's Seafood Development Agency have announced details of a strategic plan to ensure the skills required for an innovative, professional and sustainable seafood industry are delivered. Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue, T.D. officially launched the strategy, 'The Next Wave 2023-2028', which will see a spend of €5 million over the lifetime of the plan, provided by his Department.

Welcoming the new strategy, Minister McConalogue said, "An agile, professional, and skilled workforce is essential for the future sustainability of Ireland's seafood industry. The ambitious goals outlined in this strategy aim to support the industry in navigating future challenges and opportunities. By offering diverse and rewarding career paths, complemented by modern and professional training, I'm confident the industry will be better positioned to attract and retain the talent required for its long-term success."

The four key strategic objectives to be delivered upon are: Attracting new entrants to the seafood sector; Creating and promoting career paths in the seafood sector; Delivering the right courses, to the right people, in the right way; and Building strategic partnerships for growth.

Speaking at the launch, Caroline Bocquel, BIM's Chief Executive said, "The skills needed by the Irish seafood industry are evolving significantly. Although traditional skills remain extremely important and are at the core of the training BIM provides, new skills are required that reflect recent technology advancements, regulations and market demands. The development of skills to protect our natural environment, while operating a sustainable and profitable

business model, are integral to the continued growth and success of the industry. We are also working to develop a range of sustainability programmes and modules across BIM's training and client services that will enhance knowledge and insights and allow industry to meet rapidly changing demands."

The strategy seeks to address a number of challenges faced by the fishing sector, as

identified in an analysis of the Irish fishing fleet labour force, commissioned by BIM in 2022. In addition to delivering skills that are currently required, BIM will determine and plan for future skill requirements, ensuring business and technical skills.

The Irish seafood sector is an important and valuable contributor to the national economy, valued at €1.3 billion in 2022 and employing almost 16,000 adults, many of whom live and work in Ireland's coastal communities. The process of catching, growing and adding product value through seafood processing, retail and foodservice plays a key role in the cultural, social and economic fabric of coastal communities.

'The Next Wave 2023-2028' can be viewed at bim.ie



At the launch of the skills strategy for Ireland's seafood industry, 'The Next Wave 2023-2028' (l-r): Ian Mannix, BIM Skills Director; Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D.; Jean Callanan, BIM board Member and Chair of BIM's Learning and Development Committee.

Over Two Thousand Non-Irish Vessels Landed €153m Worth of Fish in Irish Ports

Marine Times Reporter

2,080 non-Irish vessels landed €153 million worth of fish into Irish ports for export to their own countries last year. The main countries involved were Spain, UK, Norway, France, Denmark and Belgium, according to the annual report from the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority.

It says that 267,200 tonnes of fish were landed in Irish Ports from 45,943 vessel landings, worth a total of over €448 million.

The data in the report includes landings, species, Irish vessels which landed into all ports, with details of the ports given. Where the non-Irish vessels landed is also reported.

There is a ports and a key species price list (all available to download at sfp.ie)

In terms of volumes and values, the 45,943 vessel landings of 267,200 tonnes totalled €448,692,973. The data is derived from Landing Declarations and Sales Notes for all vessels landing into Ireland, plus Irish vessels landing outside Ireland provided to the SFPA by the sector. Annual and quarterly statistics, including landings and inspections, are published on the SFPA website. The statistics pages provide access a range of data on fishing activity, including Quota Uptake which is available on a weekly basis.

IRISH VESSELS LANDING INTO ALL PORTS 2022

The data includes all vessels landing into Ireland, plus vessels landing outside Ireland

Landing Year	Vessel Nationality	Landing Location	Landing Country	Landing Count	Tonnes	Value €	
2022	Ireland	Ireland	Ireland	43,863	156,941	295,798,866	
		Ireland Total		43,863	156,941	295,798,866	
		Outside Ireland	Belgium		25	470	1,468,551
			Denmark		4	1,114	375,271
			France		71	3,156	6,609,725
			Netherlands		135	1,684	7,415,606
			Norway		19	6,611	6,745,989
			Spain		27	920	3,003,741
			United Kingdom		329	4,550	6,579,469
		Outside Ireland Total		610	18,505	32,198,354	
Grand Total				44,473	175,446	327,997,220	

NON-IRISH VESSELS LANDING INTO IRISH PORTS IN 2022

Landing Year	Landing Country	Vessel Nationality	Landing Count	Tonnes	Total Value €
2022	Ireland	Belgium	291	3,706	24,177,776
		Denmark	17	12,071	8,870,620
		France	590	11,639	43,488,935
		Norway	39	48,070	14,509,792
		Other Nationalities	8	880	2,580,897
		Spain	480	8,633	31,981,650
		United Kingdom	655	25,259	27,284,437
Grand Total			2,080	110,259	152,894,107

Louth Seafood Business Scoops BIM Seafood Innovation Award

One of Ireland's oldest seafood business, Morgan's Fine Fish, has been awarded the Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) Seafood Innovation Award for 2023.



Making waves at Blas na hÉireann! (l-r): Artie Clifford, Blas na hÉireann; Caroline Bocquel, CEO BIM; Gillian Morgan, Morgan's Fine Fish and Katie Ryan, BIM at the presentation of the BIM Seafood Innovation Awards in Dingle, Co. Kerry.

The Co. Louth based company scooped the prestigious award for its popular salmon darne product, topped with garlic and herb butter and wrapped with Irish chorizo ribbon, which is sold under the Dunnes Stores premium 'Simply Better' range.

BIM CEO, Caroline Bocquel, announced the 163-year-old company, which is based in Omeath, as the winner of the prestigious award at the Blas na hÉireann Irish Food Awards in Dingle, Co. Kerry.

The Award recognises excellence in seafood innovation through the entire supply chain from product creation to the use of process technology to developing new markets.

Presenting the award, Ms Bocquel said: "In what is a very competitive space it is vital that our seafood processors are encouraged to be more innovative and to incorporate new technologies which result in a seafood product that attracts new markets and increases sales."

"Morgan's Fine Fish is a company with a rich heritage and with knowledge and experience passed down from generation to generation. But they have also embraced innovation and new technologies to create fantastic new products which are giving them a competitive advantage."

She added: "In winning this award Morgan's clearly demonstrated knowledge of the basic concepts of food product development, supported by a dynamic business

and marketing plan. They built a strong partnership with Dunnes Stores that allowed them reach high market penetration via Dunnes 'Simply Better' premium food range. The company has a significant production capacity, with strong financial and sales growth."

Sales manager of Morgan's Fine Fish, Gillian Morgan, said the company was honoured to win the prestigious award. "Blas na hÉireann is a true showcase for all Irish food producers and a celebration of the best of Irish food. To win here is fantastic."

Gillian, a 5th generation of Morgan's to work in the company, also thanked Dunne's Stores for their support. Morgan's has been selling various products in Dunne's under the "Simply Better" range for almost a year.

"This award is the culmination of hard work. It is important to keep innovating in what is a very competitive space," said Gillian.

In the last year Morgan's Fine Fish has invested in an energy improvement scheme and packaging and smoking technologies with funding support from the Brexit Adjustment Reserve, which is implemented by BIM.

Morgan's Fine Fish were presented with a cheque for €800 and they also won €4,000 worth of BIM's Seafood Innovation Hub assistance.



MARINE TIMES

The Strong Voice for Ireland's Fishing, Marine and Coastal Communities

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41%

I've said it before and will say it again ... there will never be a shortage of Irish fish. However, what there will be is a shortage of Irish fish caught by Irish fishermen.

Recent figures released by the SPPA and the CSO highlight the growing disparity between fish landed in Ireland by Irish vessels and non-Irish vessels. 110,259 tonnes of fish landed by 2,080 non-Irish vessels into Irish ports accounts for 41% of all landings of fish into Ireland last year 41%! According to CSO statistics in the past 10 years we have seen landings by non-Irish vessels increase from 27% to 41% ... how much longer will it be before we breach the 50% figure?

With a decreasing fleet and quota it is astonishing to think that as an Island nation we will see every second fish being landed in Ireland (for export), being landed by a non-Irish vessel.

Like I've said before: The one thing that is for certain in the future is that there will always be Irish fish caught and readily available for our supermarkets and restaurants sadly, we are looking at the situation where it will no longer be caught by Irish vessels. It will be caught by foreign fleets in Irish waters, landed at improved facilities in Irish ports, exported out of the country on improved road networks and shipped via excellent Irish port facilities to the European mainland – only for us to import our own fish back again!

Gardai Launch 'Coastal Watch' For Drugs on The West Coast

Marine Times Reporter

A West Coast "Coastal Watch" to detect and prevent importation of illegal drugs has been launched by Galway Garda division and the Revenue Customs Service.



Two tonnes of cocaine, valued at €157 million, have been seized from the MV Matthew detained at Port of Cork Marino Point quayside.

This follows shortly after the seizure of the bulk carrier, mv Mathew, carrying the biggest amount of drugs ever attempted to be smuggled into Ireland.

"Coastal Watch demonstrates Garda Síochána's commitment to fulfilling the objectives of our Drug Detection Strategy and tackling the sale and supply of illegal drugs at local, national and international levels," said Chief Supt. Gerry Roche.

"Raising awareness among coastal communities and landowners, as well as those that are at sea for commercial and leisure purposes is an essential addition to regular Garda patrols. Seizures of large quantities of cocaine on the Irish coastline demonstrate that this is more important than ever. The public's assistance in alerting Gardaí to any suspicious activity along the coastline

helps us to combat this illegal activity."

Coastal Watch lists suspicious or unusual activity as:

- Packages floating in the sea, on the beach or hidden close to the shoreline
- Crew making landings in remote areas
- Unusual objects at sea or ashore, such as buoys or signalling devices
- Possible unauthorised landings by foreign vessels
- Merchant shipping at anchor close to land or islands
- Ships away from their normal shipping lanes
- Ships signalling ashore or being met by small craft
- Vessels operating at night without lights.

Extension To Claims For Payment Deadline For Approved Projects Under The Brexit Blue Economy Enterprise Scheme

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D, has announced that projects approved for funding under the Brexit Adjustment Reserve Blue Economy Enterprise Scheme now have until 30 October to submit their claims for payment under the scheme.

This scheme, which has a budget of €25 million, aims to counter the adverse economic and social consequences of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union on businesses operating in the blue economy and located in communities within 10km of the coastline.

The Minister said: “Our rural coastal communities are key to our seafood sector and the blue economy is key to Ireland’s coastal communities. This scheme - the Brexit Blue Economy Enterprise Scheme - is the largest ever of its kind in Ireland and it is designed to stimulate growth in our rural coastal communities by supporting blue economy initiatives across a range of activities. By extending the claim deadline for projects approved under this scheme, I am working with BIM to maximise the time available to these projects to submit their claims in order to ensure the budget for this scheme is used to its fullest potential, representing, as it does, the largest amount of funding available for the support of our coastal communities.”

Delivered through the existing Fisheries Local Action Group structure, the scheme promotes innovative approaches that provide the impetus to reinvigorate coastal communities by allowing them to restructure, reconfigure, retrain, and diversify post-Brexit via:

- Supporting diversification and entrepreneurial initiatives in the blue economy by fostering start-up businesses and facilitating existing business to diversify, add-value and grow employment in communities that are within 10km of the coastline
- Providing business mentoring and capacity development to businesses engaged with or are intent in operating within the blue economy
- Supporting upskilling and training to exploit economic opportunities that complement existing or new activities within the blue economy
- Fostering partnerships that develop innovative solutions that deliver for coastal livelihoods
- Promoting sustainable solutions within the scope of the blue economy that empower and enable the development and delivery of activities and services to improve sustainability and adapt to climate change

The Scheme is administered by Bord Iascaigh Mhara and further details are available from bim.ie

The Trawler ‘Castlemore’ and Ireland’s Biggest-Ever Drugs Seizure

Marine Times Reporter

The 15-metre trawler ‘Castlemore’ which grounded on the Blackwater Bank off the Wexford coast was the initial focus of what became the biggest drugs seizure in Ireland (reported value €157m), also involving a 189-metre bulk carrier, had been for sale in Castletownbere for two years.



Castlemore pictured off Ardglass last October - Photo courtesy Christopher Feenan

It is 21-years-old and was sold at a time when there are many fishing families trying to sell-off their boats because of the Government’s decommissioning scheme and reduced catching quotas following Brexit, that are forcing them out of the fishing industry. The *Castlemore* had fished prawns and whitefish. There are several other trawlers being offered for sale in the West Cork Port.

The owner, described as “highly respected in the community” had decided there was no future in the industry and put it up for sale. He tried to sell it online and in Castletownbere Port there had even been a ‘for sale’ sign on it at one stage, according to local information.

The sales deal was carried out entirely legally after a first approach to purchase the vessel was made in mid-September.

There is no suggestion of any kind that the former owner had any involvement or association with what subsequently transpired when the new owners completed the deal and took it over. Departing the West Cork port it was indicated that the vessel was being taken to the UK fishing port of Brixham in Devon.

The Blackwater Bank is a designated SAC – Special Area of Conservation - under the National Parks & Wildlife Service. It has a history of shipwrecks, including the *Pomona* on April 11, 1859, when the full-rigged sailing ship of 1,500 tons, newly-built and carrying 365 passengers, mostly Irish emigrants, bound from Liverpool to New York, struck it in a gale. Only 24 survived.

The sea in this area off the east Wexford coast for a distance of some six to nine miles is described as ‘shallow with sand banks barley submerged, with the notorious Blackwater Bank a ridge of submerged sand bank extending from Arklow to the Tuskar more or less parallel to the Wexford eastern coast at about nine nautical miles distance from the shore’.

The sales price for the *Castlemore* has not been confirmed publicly but has been reported to be in the region of plus €200,000. A figure considerably in excess of that was reported for its purchase six years previously when it was purchased by the former owner. That figure has also not been confirmed but gives an indication of the declining value of fishing boats due to the crisis in the industry at present.

The two men who sailed it out of Castletownbere, after the closure of the sales deal appear to have had little navigational experience. “No one with nautical knowledge would go that close to the Blackwater Bank in the conditions which were prevailing” was the assessment from knowledgeable Wexford coastline mariners. Both men were rescued by Coast Guard helicopter, arrested by Gardai and, at the time of going to press, were being held in custody

charged in connection with the drugs investigation.

Also held, at Cork Port, is the 189-metre bulk carrier, *mv Matthew*, forcibly detained after a joint security operation by the Defence Forces, naval, military, Customs and Gardai. It has been valued at about €8 million Euro and is believed to have been purchased solely to carry drugs from South American gangs to Europe. To experienced mariners it carried nothing else, visibly riding high in the water, well above the Plimsoll Line for loading and obviously in ballast.

Some of the crew had been arrested and investigations were continuing as the Marine Times went to print. What will happen to the vessel in the future is unclear.

The purchase of a trawler for use in the drugs operation, possibly, to receive some of the ship’s cargo, has caused a lot of comment and concern.

Tom Baldwin, whose father John was the well-known fish merchant from Passage East in County Waterford, sent the MARINE TIMES this commentary about the drugs interdiction and the sale of the trawler:

One ‘possible explanation’ for the purchase of the trawler in Castletownbere was probably from the desperation of the owner fisherman, who was forced to because of EU ‘diktats’ forcing its lay-up due to fishing quota restrictions for the Irish Fishing Fleet.

No Naval Boats available to patrol the ‘Irish Box’, where Spanish, French Trawlers, etc, may fish with impunity, with just the LE William Butler Yeats available for duty, of the eight Navy boats ‘laid-up’ in Haulbowline, due to shortage of crews. The lonely ‘P63’ had been required for monitoring the MV Matthew.

As new quotas are impossible to acquire in the present climate of fishery restrictions, trying to find a buyer for the laid-up trawler would have been very difficult for the owner of the now grounded retired fishing trawler.

Anyone who comes along offering to buy a laid-up boat would be quite welcome to buy the vessel.

My father, John, had a 50 foot ring-net boat (The Bluebird), which had lots of problems - back in the 1950s. He had tried to sell it. It had been laid-up in Cheekpoint port, County Waterford, for many months. It was eventually bought (at bargain price) by a Russian National, who told my Dad that his purpose was to convert the boat into ‘a Houseboat’.

That’s the last we ever heard about ‘The Bluebird.’

INDUSTRY OPINION: Chief Executives of the FPO's discuss the latest industry news.



IS&EFPO - Working For The Fishermen

31% Reduction in Irish Sea Haddock Catches Not Believable

John Lynch, Chief Executive of the Irish South & East Fish Producers' Organisation, highlights concerns about scientific advice on stocks, suggests the need for multi-annual programme planning, outlines the contrasts between scientific advice, landing obligations, the reality of fishing, seeks the implementation of the Hague Preferences and says that there must be a reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, not just an EU Commission report about it, which is not acceptable.

We are coming up to the start of the EU-UK negotiations and the fishing opportunities for 2024. Our main concern is the number of stocks that now have zero catch advice. There are three cod stocks, then you have black sole in the Irish Sea and you have the possible addition of whiting in the Celtic Sea, although we are not sure of that yet. A small quota of whiting next year would be a disaster for the fleet. The science is poor in the Celtic Sea for this stock and if we get a small quota, we are in trouble with it.

To add insult to injury on this one, the proposal for haddock in the Celtic Sea is minus 31 per cent. This is really a disaster for Irish fishermen because we depend on this stock. It is hard to understand this advice. I would not be one to argue with advice because usually they are reasonably accurate, but in this situation, I do not believe this advice to be accurate or correct because there is no vessel fishing in the Celtic Sea, no matter what type of fishing they are doing, that doesn't have some haddock in their catches and log book data will easily prove that.

So with that amount of fish on the ground and it is good-sized fish, it is hard to believe that the advice is for a cut of such magnitude, 31 per cent. I would definitely argue that advice.

Something needs to be done to avert this zero TAC advice coming out for different stocks annually.

If the biomass is below the minimum biomass spawning stock limit, then it is required to return it to above the limit within one calendar year. In a lot of situations this cannot be done so a multi-annual programme is needed when a stock comes into that delimit situation and zero TAC advice is made. Then a multi-annual management plan should be developed to restructure and return that stock to acceptable level over multiple years, not just trying to achieve the impossible in one year. The rule would still be there, if a stock falls below a delimit in biomass, for a measure to be brought in to return it to above the limit. But it is impossible to do that within a year if a zero becomes a zero TAC advice on a species.

It can't work when you have a landing obligation. If you have a by-catch you have to bring it ashore. If you've no quota, then you're in trouble. If you don't bring it ashore, you're in trouble. So a management plan is needed for any stock that has a zero TAC advice to allow the restructuring of that stock to bring it back to the safe level above the delimit. That needs to be a measured plan that will do this in several years and not trying to do the impossible in one calendar year.

If it keeps going as it is, it will end up with vessels being tied to the pier.

Our other issues, with the quotas and all of the work our industry has done to have some reform of the CFP, for the Commission to say that a report is enough and not a review, is not acceptable. Under the relative stability management system, which is applied, Ireland has a very, very small share of catches overall which needs some attention, such as the sole where we have somewhere just less than 4 per cent of the European quota sole on the South Coast of Ireland Area 7. We need some improvement in that situation and we have the Hague Preferences on that stock but it is not invoked. I think we should start making some attempt to invoke that Hague Preference.

It is impossible to fish for ground fish on the South Coast without catching some sole and we are only managing on the small quota we have with very, very tight management. The landing obligation is making this very difficult for vessels, trying to deal with the quota at one side and the landing obligation on the other. We have a large megrim quota which vessels are allowed to target and rightly so. It is very hard to do that, to target a megrim fishery, without catching some sole. Sole is not matching the level of our megrim or monk quota. The landing obligation is causing great difficulty here and I think we need to invoke the Hague Preference on sole to rebalance the situation for those fishermen to fish the species that they have a quota for, the megrim by giving them a small bit more on the one where they have a very tight situation. Give them a small bit more room to work, so that fishermen can be allowed to remain legal.



Killybegs Fishermen's
ORGANISATION LTD.

Norway and Faroese Actions Are A Scandal

Sean O'Donoghue, Chief Executive of the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation, says the manner in which Norway and the Faroe islands have been acting in setting their own mackerel quotas is a scandal. He also warns that the EU must restore Ireland's fishing quotas to their pre-Brexit levels or even make them higher and outlines the challenges facing the industry.

The big issue for us is what is happening in the mackerel fishery. It is an absolute scandal and disgrace because Norway and Faroes have been setting themselves autonomous quotas for the last three years - 2021, 2022, 2023. These quotas are about 55 per cent above what they traditionally have had as a share.

This is having an effect on the stock and it is likely we will be seeing another reduction in the scientific advice. If we did not have this 'carry on,' from figures that we have done, instead of a decrease, we would be looking at an increase in the mackerel stock.

What happened this Summer was that our fishermen were spending a lot of time at sea and making catches that weren't of the right quality and putting it for fishmeal.

That is absolutely unacceptable.

At least we know now that the European Commission has started some reaction response to Norway and reminded them about the preferential treatment for their herring coming into the European market. We have been after the Commission for years about using the power the EU has in this market. At least this action is one step

in the right direction.

This 'carry on' has to stop. It should not have been allowed to drag on for the last three years. The EU must get to grips with it.

Because of this situation dragging on, Norway and the Faroes are trying to establish a track record. They did this before, back in 2000, when blue whiting was being agreed to be shared-out. They claimed three-to-five years of enormous catches to get a track record and they were rewarded for it.

We can't have that happening again. That is what they are trying to do again.

The second thing of immediate concern to the industry is that the EU must ensure that Ireland's quotas share overall is put back to the pre-Brexit level and higher.

These are key negotiations, but it does not look like there is a 'meeting of minds' about sharing that there should be. It is absolutely essential that this situation is changed for Ireland's benefit, because the future of the industry is being challenged in what has been done, in the way we have been treated due to Brexit, which is not acceptable.



Greencastle - Photo courtesy Catherine Turner



Co-operation and Collaboration Needed Against Non-EU States

Adh O'Donnell, Chief Executive of the Irish Fish Producers' Organisation, makes the case for re-establishing Ireland's share of mackerel and blue whiting fisheries at legitimate historical levels.

We need co-operation and collaboration to tackle the current and growing imbalance between EU and non-EU members fishing rights. It is the IFPO's firm belief that EU coastal states are losing out to non-EU members because the European Commission's scientifically-informed approach to quotas is subject to abuse by rogue Nordic players. The result of this approach is that the EU is losing its share of mackerel and blue whiting.

We have raised this matter before and aired our concerns again in Brussels in September when the EU Fisheries Council met. This is not just a matter of inequity, this practice poses a serious threat to the sustainability of European fish stocks.

There is an onus on these non-EU member States to act responsibly and for the EU to use its powers to curb the plundering of these stocks.

There has been a lack of any real progress in agreeing Coastal States (CS) quota-sharing schemes for mackerel and blue whiting in recent years. So certain Coastal States who are non-EU members, profit from this vacuum by setting grossly exaggerated unilateral quotas for these stocks. This is going to impact the sustainability of the stock and we potentially face a second year of quota reductions for mackerel.

The EU has been the main loser in the last ten years in the CS framework. Our relative share of the mackerel and blue whiting fisheries has been hugely reduced by the inflated quotas adopted by Norway, Faroe Islands and Iceland over the last 5 to 10 years.

Even a cursory look at the unilateral mackerel quotas fixed in recent years shows Norway unilaterally and irresponsibly increasing its share from 18.8% to 24.55% in the space of a few years. Equally Faroe Islands goes from 10.5% to 13.7% so the EU loses again with a reduced relative share.

The EU share of blue whiting quota has also decreased. It has gone from 34.5% to 27.5% in the same fishery in the space of a few years.

Faroe Islands, with a population of 50,000 now has a bigger share in the blue whiting fishery than the EU.

In a recent letter to the Norwegian Ministry, the Fisheries Commissioner, Virginijus Sinkevicius said the EU regretted "the unilateral increase in the Norwegian

quota and remains deeply concerned about the negative impact this has on the important stock that we share and the economic consequences for our fishing fleet."

The Commissioner went on to say that this "undermines the efforts of other Coastal States to establish stable mackerel quotas in the absence of an agreement and contravenes the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea."

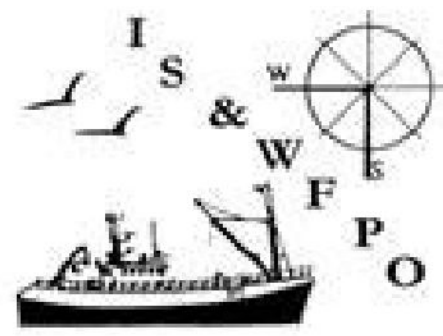
We support the Commissioner's strong stance. We have highlighted this inequity ourselves welcome the Commissioner Sink-evicius' intervention. However, we urge that it is followed up with decisive action. We call on the Commission to withhold reciprocal access arrangements for blue whiting with Norway and take all necessary steps to address this overfishing.

We accept that a blue whiting quota for Norway will figure in the quota exchanges for the 2024 EU/Norway bilateral arrangements. Access to Ireland's EEA waters is essential for Norway to be able to catch their profitable blue whiting fisheries. Without access to our waters, they have a problem to catch their enormous quota. The EU needs to exploit this reality to the maximum and negotiate tangible compensation for Ireland and other EU members.

Tangible and adequate compensation could take many forms. For instance, the EU could seek transfer of blue whiting or mackerel quota from Norway to the EU. There is a precedent for this in the recent UK-Norway deal in June 2023. In this bilateral agreement, 24,000 tonnes of Norway's inflated mackerel quota was transferred to the UK in exchange for Norwegian access to 160,000 tonnes of mackerel in the UK zone.

The bottom line is that we need to re-establish Ireland's share of the mackerel and blue whiting fisheries at legitimate historical levels. Time is not on our side as the fishing sector is suffering. We have asked Marine Minister Charlie McConalogue to highlight the value of Ireland's unique marine resources and secure the support of other EU states to deliver a fairer deal.

We are satisfied that the Minister has taken on board our concerns and this was reflected in his engagement at EU Fisheries Council level in September. It was the first step in a very long process and much still needs to be done. Government and industry representatives need to collaborate to level the playing field for EU members.



Fuel Costs Will Cripple Us

Patrick Murphy, Chief Executive of the Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation calls for another public demonstration against Government neglect of the fishing industry. "We must stand up against the way the industry is being treated."

Fuel prices are rising quickly again and this is a major problem for the industry and I don't think that the people in the political spectrum realise what this is going to do to the industry. They do not realise how bad it is going to be for the industry. It is just going to cripple us. We are already struggling. We have to do something about it.

There has to be protest about this and we are going to try to make one, to reach out to all sectors of the seafood industry to show the public and our political elite that something has to be done to help us.

The EU's BAR fund (BREXIT Adjustment Reserve), before it is handed back to the EU because it has not been fully used, all of it has to be used to help us. It has been a very under-utilised tool that could have been used to shore up our industry. We hope that there will be a protest before the Budget and probably in Dublin. This is one

of the richest countries in the world, full employment the Government declares and yet the fishing industry is being treated badly and we are clinging on by our fingernails.

Fuel is rising rapidly in cost and the Government is putting up the excise duty and that is going to hit further the coastal communities and the industry.

Politicians are a waste of time, we have to show how bad things are to get through to those who are responsible.

In France, President Macron asked the French oil industry to sell fuel at cost price to the fishing sector and this island nation's Government does nothing to help the industry with fuel costs, even though the EU approved that it could.

The French can act to help their industry on fuel costs, but not our Government, which is just hammering the fishing fleet.

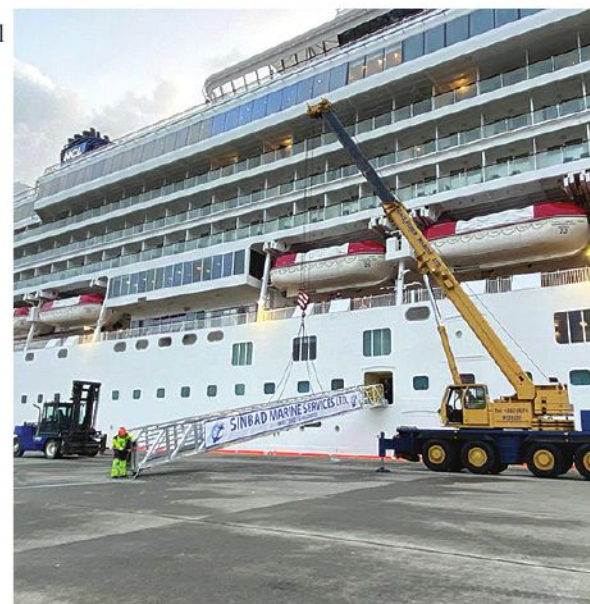
Sinbad Marine Services Paves the Way for Attracting Larger Cruise Ships to Killybegs with New 18 Metre Passenger Gangway

Sinbad Marine Services in Killybegs have proudly unveiled their new 18m gangway with the arrival of MV Norwegian Star, the longest cruise ship to visit Killybegs. The gangway represents a massive investment and vote of confidence in the future of cruise tourism for County Donegal.

Built and designed by MMG Ocean, Killybegs and with the support of the BIM Brexit Blue Economy Enterprise Development Scheme, this gangway will attract the larger cruise vessels which are not always built with the tidal range of the Northwest coast of Ireland in mind.

Sinbad Marine's new 18m gangway will provide convenient and safe access for passengers and crew disembarking to enjoy a day in Killybegs or take a tour of local attractions. This longer gangway allows for a gentler angle underfoot for guests. The wheelchair friendly surface and 1m width makes the shoreside accessible for all.

Presenting the new gangway, Sinbad Marine Director Julie Parkinson commented, "Summer traditionally was a quiet season in Killybegs, but cruise ships have been bringing and attracting visitors to town in massive numbers. Killybegs is now the third most popular cruise port in the Rep of Ireland, its popularity has grown along with the opportunities for local businesses and attractions. This gangway elevates Killybegs as an attractive port for



cruise ships, and without it, Killybegs is not an option for larger ships. Investing in the same facilities that can be found in larger ports shows Sinbad Marine's commitment to supporting and growing cruise tourism in Killybegs."

THE MARINE TIMES INTERVIEW

“The quality of water in our rivers and lakes has been deteriorating ...”

Anne Goggin, Project Manager ‘Waters Of Life’

Our monthly interview feature highlights aspects of Ireland’s marine sector to bring the widest maritime coverage to readers. This month Deputy Editor, Tom MacSweeney talks to Anne Goggin, the Project Manager of ‘Waters of LIFE’ a €20m project to improve and protect Irish rivers.

“The quality of water in our rivers and lakes has been deteriorating in recent years,” says Anne Goggin at her office in Croom, County Limerick.

She is leading the €20m project – ‘The Waters of LIFE’ - to halt and correct that deterioration.

She stresses its importance: “The aim is to address and reverse this trend of deterioration. Agriculture, forestry, peat extraction, quarrying, domestic wastewater treatment systems, will all be part of the work. These have the greatest impact on water bodies. Changes to the physical structure of rivers, sediment accumulation, over-enrichment by nutrients, are other risks.”

Rivers are vital to life, essential in our homes, central to much of industry, feed source to our estuaries. Clean water is of huge importance.

Anne Goggin is Project Manager for ‘The Waters of LIFE’. The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, for which she works, is the ‘lead’ authority.

“The on-going loss of ‘high status’ waters is among the most concerning, protracted and persistent water quality trend in Ireland,” she says.

Her team has compiled new insights into the characteristics of these ‘high status’ rivers which are Ireland’s most pristine waters.

They are the subject of the ‘*Framework of Measures and Best Practice Guidelines for High Status Objective Water Bodies.*’ That is the title of the report drawn up by her team. It focuses on these rivers that can be in “remote, rural parts and assessed as pristine or close to pristine, potentially rich in biodiversity.”

Other water quality trends have had well-understood ‘cause and effect’ identified, with detailed plans put in place to mitigate impacts, she tells me, but makes it clear that more actions are necessary to protect pristine waters. Many of these are small, upland streams. The protection and restoration of these waters is one of the key principles of the Water Framework Directive.

After the 70s, when river pollution was of huge nationwide concern, due to industrial effluent, agricultural run-off and lack of domestic sewage treatment, by the late 80s there were around 500 Irish rivers designated as being of high status, really clean, healthy rivers. That number is now down to about 45, according to Ms. Goggin.



“Ireland is one of a small number of EU Member States that still has a number of such high status water bodies, but more actions are necessary to protect them and address the pressures they face.”

That is the aim for ‘The Waters of LIFE’ project, part of the EU’s ‘LIFE’ Programme. Of the €20m budget for

the project which will run until 2028, the EU is contributing €9.5m.

Six catchment areas around the country have been chosen for the initial project work the Shournagh near Blarney in Co. Cork, another Cork river, the smaller Awbeg (Kilbrin) near Kanturk in the north of the county which runs into the Blackwater. Also selected are the Island River in the Galway/Roscommon area near Ballymoe; rivers in the catchment of Lough Graney, Co. Clare and the Avonmore River in County Wicklow. These are regarded as either of current ‘high status’ or to have fallen below that level, or are in danger of deteriorating.

The Sheen in Kerry, which has held ‘high status’ for several years, is the control river for the project.

“Our aim is to address and reverse the trend of deterioration,” Ms. Goggin says. “What we learn from the project will enable recommendations to be made for the development of future agri-environment and forestry policies and provide for the long-term sustainable management of high-status river catchment areas.

“Catchments are really important, the ‘high status’ rivers show us what they were intended to be by Nature. The areas can be of between 75 and 150 sq. kilometres around the rivers. Why have we lost so many of these rivers and what can we do to protect those that remain and recover those that have been lost? These are issues to be addressed.”

Stakeholders - local authorities, communities, landowners, farmers – are being called on to take part as the project draws up protective measures. There will be financial rewards for participating landowners, including foresters, from a voluntary results-based payments scheme that will link higher environmental river catchment quality with higher payments.

Over 300 rivers have been identified around Ireland as the total objective for ‘high status.’ The six chosen are initial ‘pilots’.

There are 16 partners to the Department of Housing which is the lead authority for the ‘Waters of LIFE’ project. These include: the Department of Agriculture and the Marine; Teagasc; LawPro (Local Authority Waters Programme); the Environmental Protection Agency; Coillte, the Forestry Service and local development companies.

- Wanted -

News from Your Coastal Community - Readers Photos - Letters to the Editor - Your Opinion

**The Marine Times Newspaper is Your Newspaper
Dedicated to Ireland’s Fishing Industry and Coastal Communities**

Contact us at editor@marinetimes.ie or WhatsApp on 087 7989582

Upcoming Courses 2023/24

NFCI Castletownbere

- Commercial Scuba Diving Operations
25 September - 27 October 2023
- Advanced Firefighting
02 October - 06 October 2023
- Navigation Control Course
09 October - 20 October 2023
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
10 October - 12 October 2023
17 October - 19 October 2023
07 November - 09 November 2023
05 December - 07 December 2023
- Passenger Boat Proficiency
23 October - 27 October 2023
27 November - 01 December 2023
- GMDSS General Operators Certificate
06 November - 17 November 2023
- Surface Supplied Diving Operations
06 November - 01 December 2023
- STCW Personal Safety and Social Responsibility
16 November 2023
- STCW Fire Prevention and Firefighting
21 November - 23 November 2023
18 December - 20 December 2023
- STCW Medical Care Aboard Ship
27 November - 01 December 2023
- STCW Medical First Aid
13 December - 15 December 2023

NFCI Greencastle

- Fishing Vessel Engineer
16 October 2023 - 02 February 2024

- Three Day Basic Safety Training
23 October - 25 October 2023
13 November - 15 November 2023
04 December - 06 December 2023
- Enhanced Safety Training
26 October 2023
16 November 2023
- STCW Medical Care Aboard Ship
20 November - 24 November 2023
- Advanced Firefighting
27 November - 01 December 2023
- STCW Fire Prevention and Firefighting
13 December - 15 December 2023
- Second Hand Full Certificate of Competency
03 January - 19 April 2024
02 April - 14 July 2024

Coastal Training Unit 1

West Coast

- Three Day Basic Safety Training
10 October - 12 October 2023, Rossaveal, Co. Galway
28 November - 30 November 2023, Carrigaholt, Co. Clare
19 December - 21 December 2023, Dingle, Co. Kerry
- GMDSS Short Range Certificate
17 October - 19 October 2023, Rossaveal, Co. Galway
21 November - 23 November 2023, Carrigaholt, Co. Clare
12 December - 14 December 2023, Dingle, Co. Kerry

- Enhanced Safety Training
25 October 2023, Rossaveal, Co. Galway
26 October 2023, BIM Office, Co. Galway
15 November 2023, Carrigaholt, Co. Clare
6 December 2023, Dingle, Co. Kerry

Coastal Training Unit 2

East Coast

- Three Day Basic Safety Training
10 October - 12 October 2023, Howth, Co. Dublin
24 October - 26 October 2023, Howth, Co. Dublin
14 November - 16 November 2023, Kilmore Quay, Co. Wexford
28 November - 30 November 2023, Kilmore Quay, Co. Wexford
12 December - 14 December 2023, Howth, Co. Dublin
- GMDSS Short Range Certificate
17 October - 19 October, Howth, Co. Dublin
21 November - 23 November 2023, Kilmore Quay, Co. Wexford
- Enhanced Safety Training
01 November 2023, Howth, Co. Dublin
02 November 2023, Howth, Co. Dublin
05 December 2023, Kilmore Quay, Co. Wexford
06 December 2023, Kilmore Quay, Co. Wexford

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Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland





BREXIT Money Being Saved for A Rainy Day?

Well Minister, it's pouring right now in the Irish fishing industry!



Cormac Burke, Chairman of the Irish Fishing and Seafood Alliance writes; Some time ago, as the industry was reeling from the disastrous deal that Ireland got out of BREXIT, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue made much fanfare of the 600 million euro that the Irish fishing and seafood industry was getting in EU / BAR compensation money to ease their fears.

And, as we all now know, the 'compensation' to Irish fishermen saw Ireland being the only EU Member State to NOT hand out a single euro in actual cash compensation to fishermen but instead substituted their monthly quota catch with a basic payout in a 'tie-up' scheme, paid out a bare minimum to the owners of one third of the Irish demersal fleet to decommission their vessels, and spent some money on repairing small piers and harbours (funds for which should have come out of the Irish and EU Structural Funds kitty and not out of the BAR money).

Throughout this period, Ireland's marine minister was also the only EU fisheries minister to refuse to use any funds from any source (Irish or EU) to subsidise the rising cost of fuel for the Irish fleet and, to rub salt

into this wound for fishermen, he went out of his way to tell the media that other EU nations were not paying their fishermen a fuel subsidy.

Meanwhile it is reported that there is about to be a compensation payout to the Irish pelagic fleet but although this figure is in the millions of euros, it will barely cover the losses of the past two years never mind the billions that will be lost to the pelagic industry over the next decade alone.

And so, while the IFSA have previously voiced concerns over the EU/BAR's 'use it or lose it' rule i.e. that unused BAR compensation money must be returned to the EU in December of this year, it's very relevant that we take a closer look at exactly where and how this fund has been utilised so far:

* The total amount of BAR funding allocated to Ireland is €1.015 billion - 80% paid in three allocation rounds between 2021 and 2023, with the remaining amount (€0.812 billion) to be received in 2025;

* According to the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan and Reform, the expenditure of allocations thus far is:

Agriculture €271m / Enterprise €15m / Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science €37.3m / Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform €4.4m / Foreign Affairs €2.2m / Tourism Culture Arts Gaeltacht Sports and Media €7.75m /

Environment Climate and Communications €24m / Health €5.5m / Justice €21.5m / Transport €0.1m - - - a total spent or allocated by the Irish Government of €389m.

Surely alarm bells will be going off in various sectors of Irish commercial industry with, as it would appear, just €389m of a figure available in excess of €800m means that some €411m (less the €150m that Ireland has transferred back to the 'Re-PowerEU' fund) leaving €261m that will have to be returned to the EU if it remains unused in three months' time.

And, as far as the Irish fishing industry is concerned, this data raises many questions primarily of which should be what has happened to the €600m that the EU and

Irish Government said would be going to the Irish fishing industry as it was the sector that had suffered and lost the most as a result of Brexit?

It is of great concern that the figures issued by the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP and Reform do not even make a single reference to the fishing or marine sector - - therefore indicating that whatever came the way of this suffering industry came as part of the €271m allocated / spent in Agriculture.

Unless the Agriculture & Marine Minister comes clean on the real state of finances and unpaid compensation to the Irish fishing industry as a matter of urgency and admits that Ireland faces having to return millions in unused EU compensation allocations, Irish fishermen and processors are going to be left with a situation where not only have they lost a massive chunk of revenue but where they have also been swindled out of their EU compensation by mismanagement of this Government, an incompetent Minister and senior officials in many State departments.

YOUR INDUSTRY NEEDS YOU!

The Irish Fishing & Seafood Alliance (IFSA) continues to lead the fight for justice for Ireland's fishing industry and the coastal communities who rely on it.

The IFSA is a non-profit organisation that receives no funding from any source other than the generous support from fishing vessels, processors, ancillary service companies and individuals.

YOUR support would be greatly appreciated and annual subscription rates are only €20 for an individual, €100 for an inshore vessel or sole trader and a modest rising scale for larger vessels and companies (email ifsacormac@gmail.com for further details on this).

If you want the IFSA motto of 'Your Voice in Our Industry' to continue to put pressure on this Government and the marine minister to stop neglecting our marine resources then please play your part by making your subscription.

Bank details below and when you make a payment, please email IFSA ifsacormac@gmail.com and a formal receipt will be issued for your files.

Account name: Irish Fishing and Seafood Alliance
 Acc No: 65603742 Bank: Bank of Ireland, Killybegs, Co. Donegal
 Sort Code (NSC): 904907 IBAN: IE29 BOFI 9049 0765 6037 42 BIC: BOFIE2D

Thank you for your support and for becoming a part in this industry's rapidly growing fight for justice.



**Cormac Burke,
 Chairman,
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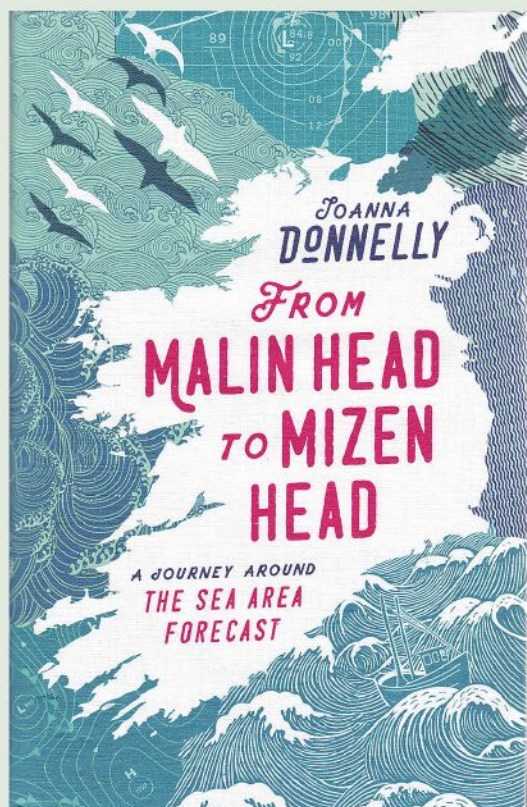


"Hannah J" returning to Kinsale. Photo courtesy Carroll O'Donoghue, KinsaleAngling.com

From Malin Head to Mizen Head

A Journey Around the Sea Area Forecast by Joanna Donnelly

Established in 1859 in the wake of the Royal Charter Storm, the Sea Area Forecast was instigated 'for the protection of life and property on the island of Ireland and in our waters'. Its regular broadcast on RTE Radio at 6am and midnight acts as gentle morning wake-up call and a soothing bedtime lullaby, yet few people truly understand the significance of the rhythmic forecast and its unique language.



In *From Malin Head to Mizen Head*, meteorologist Joanna Donnelly takes readers on a journey around Ireland's Sea Area Forecast, visiting each of the headlands routinely read out on the airwaves. Each chapter is simultaneously a travel diary and a lesson in the weather – from the science of storms to the history of this essential forecast – that introduces readers to the places whose names they recognise all too well.

Filled with notes from the field, stories about the people she met along the way, and tales of how the forecast predicted big weather events blowing in off the sea, Joanna's palpable passion for understanding weather along with her entertaining writing will satisfy the armchair traveller wishing to be swept away on a journey around Ireland's most remote headlands – **from Malin Head to Mizen Head**.

Joanna Donnelly is a meteorologist and weather forecaster at Met Éireann and RTE. She has a regular slot discussing the news of the day on the RTE Today Show. Joanna is passionate about explaining the science behind the weather in language that is accessible for everyone and in 2018 she wrote *The Great Irish Weather Book*, illustrated by Fuchsia MacAree (Gill Books), in order to help children understand the weather. She is married to meteorologist Harm Luijkx and they live in Portmarnock with their three children.

From Malin Head to Mizen Head is published by Gill Books and is available in all good bookshops or online at www.gill.ie

Kerry's Beloved Peig Sayers to Get A New Lease of Life!



She is a familiar feature with tourists from all over the world. And now Kerry's popular Peig Sayers is to have a makeover that will give her a new lease of life.

However, it is not the renowned and long departed Blasket Island storyteller whose life story was once compulsory on the leaving certificate curriculum who is to have a transformation. But The Peig Sayers ferry, which has been bringing tourists from Dingle harbour across the bay to experience the beauty and mystery of the Great Blasket Island for the last 22 years.

The owner of The Peig Sayers, Billy O'Connor, has confirmed that the boat is to be fitted with new engines at the end of September, thanks to a €65,000 grant under the Brexit Blue Economy Enterprise Scheme, implemented by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM). Hundreds of businesses around Ireland have benefitted from the scheme in recent years.

"The Peig Sayers has been such a loyal servant to us," says Billy, who runs the Great Blasket Island Experience. "She is not only a ferry, but she is a vital lifeline for the island, transporting goods from the mainland during the summer and winter months. She is a rubbish boat, a supply boat, and a maintenance boat. And when she breaks down, everything stops."

Being more than 20 years old The Peig Sayers has been breaking down more frequently, something that has been disrupting Billy's tourism business. "The new engines will make the ferry more reliable. And ultimately it will have a positive impact on the business. We are thrilled that this work is going to take place and are very grateful to BIM," said Billy.

The Great Blasket Experience is a seasonal tourism enterprise which operates full day eco tours from Dingle Bay to the Great Blasket Island from April to October. It is licensed to carry 12 passengers, and for many years those on board got to see and interact with the famous Dolphin, Fungie. It also offers overnight stays in three cottages on the island, giving people the opportunity to stay in one of

the most beautiful and untouched locations in Ireland. There is no electricity, running water, or wifi, so it offers a unique escape.

Outside of the tourist season The Peig Sayers makes regular trips to the island to manage the large number of sheep which are essential for the island's ecosystem.

Billy's grandfather and granduncle started the ferry business and commissioned The Peig Sayers to be built in 2001. Billy took it over in 2014. "While the majority of ferry operators at that time were solely focused on Fungie the Dolphin, we were one of the few eco boat tours departing from Dingle Harbour which included an extensive history and geography tour of the area, combined with island landing," said Billy.

The Great Blasket Island was put on the map when Billy and his partner Alice did a call out for two caretakers to live on the island for the tourist season. "Since we first advertised this role five

years ago we have had over 100,000 applications from people all over the world. It is incredible," said Billy. "We were not expecting this reaction. After all it is inviting people to live for around six months on a remote island with no water, electricity, or wifi. But it is something which clearly appeals to people."

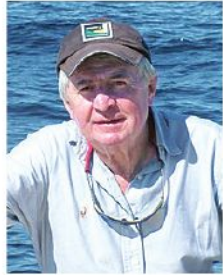
The massive international interest in the caretaker's role has

been a huge draw for the area and Billy says he hopes it has had a knock-on affect to the local hospital sectors.

"We are looking forward to the 2024 season and to having a fit Peig Sayers doing what she does best!"

For further information on the Peig Sayers and the Great Blasket Experience visit www.greatbasketisland.net





Tom MacSweeney's Maritime Diary

A Lifeboat Mechanic, An Author and A Village

It is not usual for the funding donor of a lifeboat to be present at its naming ceremony, but Valerie Adnams was in Courtmacsherry when the Severn Class stationed there was named *Val Adnams* – and she was attired in a cowboy outfit – complete with stetson, boots and jeans as she poured champagne over the bow.



Lifeboat donor Val Adnams pours champagne over the bow of Courtmacsherry's new lifeboat

Photographed with Tanaiste Micheál Martin, who has a holiday home in the village, Val's attire was quite a contrast to his sober, political dressage of dark suit and tie!

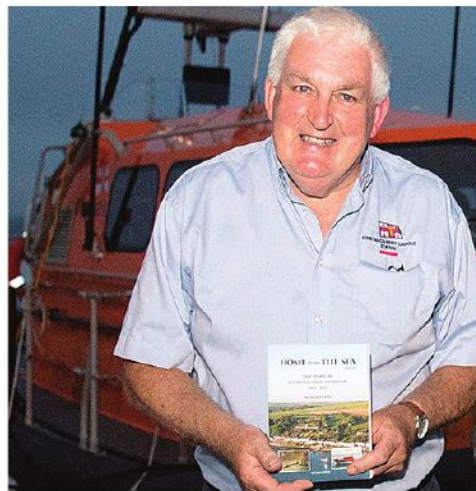


She grew up in Preston and Weymouth in the UK and told me that her "respect and admiration for the RNLI increased as she witnessed Weymouth Lifeboat going to the help of those in distress at sea."

She became an avid sailor and supporter of the RNLI, who moved to the USA and worked on Capitol Hill, Washington DC, before settling with her partner, Ed, in Idaho. She travelled from there with a group of family and friends for the naming ceremony and wore the cowboy outfit, "specially for the occasion, in honour of my American home."

At the age of 88 she is quite an impressive lady, whom I interviewed the night before the naming ceremony in the Pier Head bar at the start of a weekend when the West Cork port, for such it

was many years ago, was celebrating its association with the RNLI. There was a big attendance as I launched Micheál Hurley's history of Courtmacsherry Lifeboat, where he served for 44 years as Lifeboat Mechanic.



Former lifeboat mechanic and author Micheál Hurley and his new book

Names and faces are the tapestry of 'Home from the Sea,' which traces Courtmacsherry's station history, from within one year of the formation in 1824 of the RNLI itself to the present. It is his second time producing this book, updated from the first edition, about the lifeboats based in the village, their crews, station history and the evolving, changing times of a community committed to saving the lives of others.

The book is not just a historical publication. It is a social document about a coastal community which has changed from once

being a busy port and which, when that role ended, maintained its commitment to saving life by being a lifeboat station base.

It records a piece of information I did not know about the Lusitania sinking – that amongst the 1,197 passengers and crew who drowned – were 140 Irish men and women, 70 passengers and 70 crew.

The new lifeboat replaces the Frederick Story Cockburn, which over its time at the station served on 370 safety call-outs.

One of the most poignant interviews I recorded as a radio reporter was several years ago, with the then last surviving member of the crew of the Courtmacsherry then rowing-and-sailing lifeboat – Kezia Gwilt – which went to the rescue of Lusitania survivors.

"There were hundreds of people in the water, live persons mixed up with the dead, shouting and screaming for help," Jerry Murphy told me. "We picked up those we could, separating the live from the dead. It was a scene of horror."

A few hours before the naming ceremony, the new lifeboat and crew had an emergency call-out at 5.20a.m. on the Saturday morning, to reports of a swimmer in difficulty off Inchydoney. The emergency ended successfully. Also sadly, the day before the launch, former Courtmacsherry Lifeboat Operations Manager, Gerry Turner, died after an illness.

Marine Institute Team Wins International Sustainability Award

The Biotoxin Chemistry team who work within the Marine Environment and Food Safety Services (MEFSS) section of the Marine Institute were recently awarded the highest level (Green) of My Green Lab (MGL) certification.

MGL is a non-profit organization and a globally recognized leader in the Green lab movement. The MGL program seeks to reduce the environmental impact of laboratories in four key areas – energy, water, waste, and chemical use – through a combination of organizational initiatives and behaviour change programs. By empowering scientists to make choices that not only benefit their work but also the environment and communities around them.

Being a green certified lab has multiple benefits including; environmental protection, financial savings, enhancing the reputation and influence of an organization, promoting environmental awareness, innovation, and greater staff engagement.

The Biotoxin Chemistry team are the second laboratory within the Marine Institute to be awarded MGL certification, with the Newport facility also being certified earlier this year.

As part of the MGL certification process the Biotoxin Chemistry team enrolled in 2023 International Freezer Challenge and won the Top Small Lab Award (Government Sector). This year, 1,991 laboratories across 170 different research institutions, representing 27 countries took part in the challenge, resulting in an energy reduction of an estimated 20.7 million kWh over the past year.

The team (of 7 staff) made great efforts to incorporate a cold storage management plan involving clearing out and cleaning fridges and freezers. Their endeavors resulted in multiple units being taken out of use and an estimated energy reduction of 66.75 KWh/day (equivalent to the electricity consumption of 6 average Irish households).

Joe Silke, director of MEFSS, reaffirmed the Marine Institute's commitment to sustainability: "The Biotoxin Chemistry team's dedication, exemplifies the Institutes commitment to environmental responsibility by their recent achievement of the highest level of My Green Lab certification.

"This not only showcases our commitment to reducing our laboratory's ecological footprint but also underscores the broader positive impacts that green lab initiatives can have on our working environment, finances, reputation, and staff engagement."



BIM Courses Available to Meet Safe Manning Requirements and Changes to Fishing Certificates of Competency.

If you need a fishing Certificate of Competency (CoC) or have one and need to have it endorsed or re-validated BIM can help you with the training.

We offer **Second Hand Limited/Second Hand Full Certificate of Competency training** in both BIM colleges several times a year.

CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY ENDORSEMENTS

Fishers who hold a Second Hand Limited or Second Hand Full CoC and who wish to skipper a vessel greater than 15 metres in length can apply to have their CoC endorsed by the Marine Survey Office.

Recent changes in regulations (see Marine Notice 41 of 2023) state that the Department of Transport will no longer issue CoCs for the deck officer qualification of Second Hand Special, except for those who have already commenced a period of training for that qualification. All training, including sea service, must be completed before **1 July 2026**.

RE-VALIDATION OF CERTIFICATES OF COMPETENCY

Under the new regulations, an expiration date has been placed on all CoCs for fishing vessels, for both deck and engineer officers. The new regulations provide that all CoCs can be revalidated for a further period of five years, and every five years thereafter, subject to the requirement to complete updated training in Personal Survival Techniques (PST), Fire Prevention and Firefighting (FPFF), and Advanced Firefighting (AFF). BIM will be scheduling extra PST courses along with courses in Updated Fire Prevention & Firefighting and Updated Advanced Firefighting (one day each) from 2024 onwards.

You are encouraged to give yourself ample time to complete the re-validation and enquire about available training dates.

Please contact BIM to discuss and book any further training you may need in relation to the above.

Castletownbere College

National Fisheries College of Ireland,
Castletownbere, Co. Cork

Della O'Sullivan, College Administrator

T: + 353 27 7 1230 E: della.osullivan@bim.ie

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MFV Boy Aonghus heading out of Cashla Bay, Galway. Photo by Aodan Mc Donagh

INFOMAR Releases Five New High-Resolution Maps Showcasing the Cork Coastline in Unprecedented Detail

See the iconic Cork coastline, from Bantry Bay to Roches Point, in remarkable detail thanks to a new series of maps that have been developed by INFOMAR. From The Beara Peninsula to Mizen Head, from Cape Clear to Roaringwater Bay & Cork Harbour, these new high-resolution maps highlight the unique & intricate landscapes that lie beneath the waves.

INFOMAR (Integrated Mapping for the Sustainable Development of Ireland's Marine Resource) continue to roll out their Blue Scale Map Series; a collection of 18 high-resolution bathymetric maps of Ireland's coastal waters. Developed by a dedicated team of hydrographers, data processors and cartographers, the maps highlight the topography of the coast in remarkable detail.

BANTRY BAY



Bantry Bay runs approximately 35 km (22 miles) from northeast to southwest into the Atlantic Ocean. It is approximately 3 to 4 km (1.8 to 2.5 miles) wide at the head and 10 km (6.2 miles) wide at the entrance. Bantry Bay is a ria, a bay formed from a drowned river valley as a result of a relative rise in sea level. The bay is a deep (approx. 40 metres in the middle) and large natural bay, with one of the longest inlets in southwest Ireland, bordered on the north by the Beara Peninsula, which separates Bantry Bay from Kenmare Bay.

In 2006, the INFOMAR programme was established and is currently one of the world's largest and leading seabed mapping programmes. Funded by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, INFOMAR is a joint venture by the Geological Survey Ireland and the Marine Institute and aims to map Ireland's seabed and deliver a comprehensive baseline bathymetry dataset to underpin the future management of Ireland's marine resource.

Ireland's coastline is approximately 3,171km in length and boasts some of the most unique & dynamic marine environments in Europe. The Blue Scale Map Series is the culmination of over a decade of work. Each week, INFOMAR will be releasing a new map of a different section of the Irish coastline.

County Cork boasts a coastline of approximately 1,200km – and the latest published in the new map series are the Blue Scale bathymetric maps of Bantry Bay, Mizen Head, Roaringwater Bay, Galley Head & Cork Harbour. The five maps, released on a weekly basis each Friday, reveal the brilliant marine geology & unique seafloor across the Cork coastline.

After Cork the INFOMAR series of maps will move up the South East and East coast and all maps are available to download on infomar.ie

Seeking The Cape Clear Stone

Islanders Hope to Get Historic Stone Returned

Report by Tom MacSweeney

The 'Cape Clear Stone' dates from 4000-2000 BC, is 1.36m in length, 0.39m wide and 0.08m thick, decorated in the style of passage tomb art. It was removed from the island in the 19th century and is now housed in the Cork City Museum.

Cape Clear Islanders hope to get it returned to the island and placed in the 'Cape Clear Heritage & Fastnet Centre' which they are developing.

"Our goal is to develop a Heritage Centre that will merit national and international prominence," they say.

"The first phase will be followed by other significant developments. Our maritime heritage includes local historic shipwrecks, a tower, the history of the harbour, a Church and Castle and there is much more. The Centre will open for the Summer of 2024."

The islanders have no doubt about the ability of their home place to make its mark for visitors.

One of the historic items, which the islanders say they are "optimistic" about getting returned to the island, is the Cape Clear Stone, which was found in the 19th Century and removed from the island by Rev. John O'Leary to his garden on Sherkin Island. He moved away from there in 1881, leaving the stone to be re-discovered in 1945, when it was transferred to University College Cork and later, to Cork Public Museum. In 1984 archaeologists discovered traces of a prehistoric construction, with a chamber and possible passageway, on top of Quarantine Hill on Cape Clear. They described the site as the remains of a passage tomb and the likely original location of the Cape Clear stone.

The Cape Clear Stone is now in Cork Museum and the Cork City Council website describes it as: "This beautiful stone, ornamented with prehistoric art, not only interesting for its prehistoric significance, but also for its recent history. It is a large, prolonged, rectangular shape with a smooth surface. Its layered nature resulted in the top layer to be separated through time, but most of the decoration, comprising spirals and zig-zags, survives. The stone is decorated with megalithic art, which is almost exclusively found on the Neolithic period Passage Tombs. Neolithic spanned a long period in Ireland, from around 4000 to around 2000 BC and the period is best-known for its megalithic tombs, including the passage tombs. These comprise mounds covering stone-built central chambers, approached by a narrow passageway and were burial places. They were usually built on hilltops. The art is carved in the Fourknocks Style, a coherent design covering one surface in full. The stone depicts running spirals that are framed by parallel zig-zag lines. Megalithic art is mainly found in the north and east of the country, so the stone found on Cape Clear is an exception and indicates the possible presence of a passage tomb on the island."

Fourknocks is a Neolithic passage tomb complex built

about 5000 years ago, located 10 miles southeast of Newgrange between Ardcaith in County Meath and the Naul in County Dublin. The name Fourknocks may be from the Irish 'Fuair Cnoc' meaning 'Cold Hills'.

The Cape Clear islanders held a 'Flags Day' to launch their development of the Centre.

Micheal Ó Ceadogáin, for many years a leader of the Island's Co-op, raised the Cape Clear Flag for the Centre. Being one of the island's older residents he has spent a lifetime working for the Island as Chairman and Manager of Cape Clear Co-op and in many other roles as well. He is also known as one of the 'Iron Men of Cape Clear' about which I wrote in a previous column. These mariners plied an arduous trade in the 1960's, delivering coal to the Fastnet Lighthouse. He and his companions had to carry bags of coal on their shoulders up the 99 steps from where they landed to the lighthouse itself.

There is a close relationship between Cape Clear and the Fastnet Rock Lighthouse, going back to the original lighthouse for the area having been based, not on Fastnet, but on Cape Clear.

During the 'Flags Day' ceremony, the Cape Clear Flag was also raised close to St Ciarán Gallán and the Holy Well in North Harbour. This recalls 5,000 years of Island history represented by the Cape Clear Stone. Forty years of work by historian and author Éamon Lankford developed an impressive collection of artefacts from the Island. He carried out extensive research into its history and folklore and has produced a collection of publications about Oileán Cléire.

A Children's Flag for the new children's playground on Cape Clear was also raised on the day, as was a flag, in memory of the O'Driscoll heritage. The O'Driscoll Worldwide Archives are to be kept in the new Centre.

"Come visit us on Cape Clear Island, an historic Irish-speaking island which just off Ireland's beautiful West Cork coast," the islanders say in lauding their home place. "With a population of 120 people, the island's rich history is visible across a lush green landscape pockmarked with megalithic standing stones, a 5,000-year-old passage grave and the ruins of castles and churches dating back to the days of Ireland's earliest Christian saints."

Their new Centre will, without doubt, be a major tourist attraction. There is no doubt that Cape Clear Islanders are proud of their home place!

Inset photos; The Cape Clear Stone and the Fastnet Flag being raised by Micheal O Ceadogain at 'Flags Day' on the island.



news from around the **RNLI**
 editor@marinetimes.ie



Val Adnams from Idaho (USA) the major donor, on the bow of the RNLB Val Adnams with the crew of the Courtmacsherry Lifeboat following the naming ceremony and service of dedication that took place in the picturesque West Cork village. Also included are Brian O'Dwyer, LOM and Morgan Stockley, nephew of Val Adnams. The RNLB Val Adnams is the eleventh lifeboat to be stationed in Courtmacsherry since 1825. Photo courtesy Martin Walsh.

Emergency Call-Out and A Naming Ceremony at Courtmacsherry

Courtmacsherry was preparing for its 'big day' – the naming of its new lifeboat with the donor present, when the crew were called out in the early morning of Saturday, September 9, after a swimmer had got into difficulty at 5.20 a.m. on Inchydoney Beach about six nautical miles to the west around the Seven Heads. The crew were on their way to the scene when the distressed swimmer was got safely from the water by a member of the public, so the alert was cancelled and the new Shannon class lifeboat, Val Adnams, returned to base.

A few hours later a huge crowd turned out in sunshine for the naming ceremony. This was carried out by the principal donor, Val Adnams, who had made the journey

from her home in Idaho, in the United States to be present.

Guests at the ceremony included Lord Mayor of County Cork, Councillor Frank

O'Flynn, Tánaiste Michéal Martin, RNLI Head of Region Anna Classon, RNLI Director of Engineering and Supply Jamie Chestnutt, Coast Guard Head of Operations, Gerard O'Flynn, and a large number of search and rescue colleagues from local lifeboat stations and Coast Guard Units.

It is unusual for the donor to be present at a lifeboat naming ceremony, so there was a special welcome for 'Guest of Honour' Val Adnams, who was accompanied by a group of friends and family. She wore a Stetson and cowboy boots for the occasion, "in honour of my American home, where I have lived for the past number of years," she said.

A lifelong supporter of the RNLI and an avid sailor and sportsperson, she grew up in Preston and Weymouth. "My respect and admiration for the RNLI increased as I witnessed the call-outs of the local Weymouth Lifeboat going to the help of others in distress at sea."

At 23, she moved to Washington DC where she worked on Capitol Hill for some years, before meeting her partner Ed and settling in Idaho.

"It is a great honour and privilege to have funded this Shannon class lifeboat. It warms my heart to know that this lifeboat will be helping the crew to keep the waters around

Courtmacsherry lifeboat station safe. Most of the crew are volunteers who give up their time to help others. This lifeboat is the best of its kind and the crew who will use it, deserve nothing less," she said.

The lifeboat was received into service on behalf of station by the Courtmacsherry Lifeboat Operations Manager, Brian O'Dwyer, who paid tribute to his predecessor, Gerry Turner, who had passed away after an illness, the day before. He thanked the donor for her generous gift and praised the capability of the new lifeboat, which has introduced the latest in marine propulsion technology to the station.

"The improved control and manoeuvrability of the Shannon Class lifeboat will mean easier motion at sea, with safety to the fore. The vessel has an expected lifespan of fifty years. I have every confidence that this new lifeboat will continue to provide a safe environment for our crew and a first-class rescue service for seafarers in need of assistance at sea."

The lifeboat replaces the station's previous All-Weather lifeboat *Frederick Story Cockburn* which went on 370 call-outs.

• See also Tom MacSweeney's *Diary on page 14* for a report of the launching of the station's history book by former lifeboat mechanic Micheál Hurley.



900 Service Call-Outs by Seven Crew Honoured in Galway

In recognition of their dedication and commitment of time, energy and skills, seven members of the Galway RNLI crew were presented with long-service awards for achieving 50, 100, 150 and 200 services.

The seven crew had a total of 900 services between them, including 200 services by David Oliver, who has been with the Galway RNLI crew since the station opened in 1995.

The area covered by the Galway RNLI Lifeboat and crew is the section of Galway Bay east of a line between Black Head in Co Clare and Spiddal, Co Galway and includes Barna, Salthill, Galway city and the mouth of the River Corrib, Oranmore, Kinvara, Newquay and Ballyvaughan.

“Last year our crew and lifeboat launched 33 times and came to the aid of 31 people,” said Mike Swan, Lifeboat Operations Manager at Galway RNLI Station. “Every year we recognise the dedication of our volunteer crew by presenting long-service awards. This year we have a number of crew who achieved significant milestones including Lisa McDonagh with 50 services; Shane Folan and Olivia Byrne with 100 services; Declan Killilea, Brian Niland, David Badger with 150 services and David Oliver with the record of 200 services.

“This is only possible due to the dedication of our crew who go to sea and the wider group of volunteers who provide shore support and fundraising support which in turn relies on the generosity of our community in Galway further afield.”

“Our lifeboat volunteers have all kinds of backgrounds and jobs. At a moment’s notice, they readily exchange work, comfort or sleep for cold, wet and fatigue. They spend many hours of their own time training together so they can meet the dangers and challenges they face on search and rescue missions at sea.

“The awards are not just to celebrate the achievements of the crew who are willing to drop everything at the sound of their pager, but also their families and friends who play a key role in supporting our crew to spend time saving lives at sea and being there for them when they get home after what may sometimes be a very challenging day or night on the water.”

Darkness No Problem for Wicklow Crew

“A call out during the hours of darkness always adds an extra challenge, but the crew are very well prepared throughout the year with the training they undertake,” said Wicklow RNLI Coxswain Tommy McAuley, after the crew rescued a yacht and its lone sailor on an early Sunday morning emergency call-out.

The 36ft. yacht was located half a mile northeast of Wicklow Harbour on Sunday,

September 24 and the sailor was in distress with mechanical and electrical issues aboard when the Coast Guard called-out the Wicklow RNLI crew at 1:48 am. The all-weather lifeboat, *Joanna & Henry Williams*, set off at 2 a.m. into Force 6-7 winds blowing from the North West. Reaching the yacht it was decided to tow it to the safety of Wicklow Harbour, where it was safely secured at 2:45 a.m.

Coxswain Tommy McAuley expressed his pride in his team after the heroic maritime rescue, stating: “A call out during the hours of darkness always adds an extra challenge, but the crew are very well prepared throughout the year with the training they undertake.”

Storm Agnes Recues for Baltimore, Clifden and Achill RNLI

Baltimore RNLI were called out during Storm Agnes on Wednesday, September 27. The crew launched their all-weather lifeboat at 3.48 p.m, following a request from the Irish Coast Guard to go to the assistance of a yacht on the Ilen River that was dragging its anchor in storm force winds. They arrived at the yacht at 3.59 p.m. With one person on board it had gone aground. Coxswain Pat Collins assessed the situation and decided that a tow was necessary. Volunteer crew members Micheal Cottrell and David Ryan were put aboard the casualty vessel to rig a tow and buoy off and cut clear the anchor so the yacht could be towed free. It was towed to Baltimore Harbour.

Due to the storm force conditions with winds gusting to force 12 (65 knots) Baltimore’s inshore lifeboat was launched to assist the all-weather lifeboat in berthing the casualty vessel to a secure mooring, close to Baltimore Lifeboat Station Once the casualty vessel was secured and the skipper of the yacht was happy, Baltimore’s all weather lifeboat made the short journey back to the lifeboat house, arriving at 5.08pm whilst the inshore lifeboat came alongside the casualty vessel to collect the two remaining volunteer lifeboat crew. The inshore lifeboat then returned to the lifeboat station, arriving at 5.20pm.

There were seven volunteer crew onboard the all weather lifeboat, Coxswain Pat Collins, mechanic Cathal Cottrell and crew members Jerry Smith, Micheal Cottrell, Don O’Donovan, Colin Whooley and David Ryan. There were four volunteer crew onboard the inshore lifeboat, Helm Kieran Collins and crew members Kieran O’Driscoll, Rob O’Leary and James Kitt. Assisting at the lifeboat station were Rianne Smith, Marion MacFeely, Seamus O’Driscoll, Brian McSweeney and Sean McCarthy. Conditions during the call out were testing with strong gale force winds of force 8 to 9, gusting up to storm force 11-12 and a large sea swell.

The volunteer RNLI crews of both Clifden and Achill were called out



Galway RNLI volunteer crew with their long service awards outside the lifeboat station from left: Seán Óg Leydon, Deputy Launching Authority; Olivia Byrne (100 services); Brian Niland (150 services), Lisa McDonagh (50 services), David Oliver (200 services), Declan Killilea (150 services) and Mike Swan, Lifeboat Operations Manager. Missing from the photo: Dave Badger (150 services) and Shane Folan (100 services).

early the morning of Storm Agnes to assist a sailor who had run into difficulty in heavy seas.

The shout lasted nearly ten hours in very difficult sea conditions and was the longest tow ever carried out by Clifden RNLI, a total of 22 miles.

Both Clifden and Achill Island RNLI were tasked by Malin Head Coast Guard just after 6am, the sailor of a 46ft yacht had called for assistance after losing engine power and weather conditions were deteriorating.

Thomas Davis was Coxswain of Clifden’s St Christopher, his first rescue in command of the lifeboat since passing out as Coxswain of the all weather lifeboat. Crew members were Joe Acton, Andy Bell, Shane Conneely, Chris Nee and Owen Hayes.

Achill Island RNLI launched their all weather lifeboat Sam and Ada Moody with Declan Corrigan as Coxswain and Michael Cattigan, Patrick Kilbane, Thomas Ruddy, Terry Hogarth and Alex Blackmun as crew.

Sea conditions at the time were very difficult and the lifeboat crews faced four meter swells, driving rain and Force 8 winds out at sea. The casualty vessel was located 10 miles west of Clare Island, once on scene the crew communicated with the sailor who was unharmed and grateful for the assistance.

Clifden lifeboat crew managed to establish a tow-line despite the storm conditions and commenced the long journey to safe harbour in Cleggan. Achill crew provided welcome cover and escorted St Christopher and the casualty vessel back to safety, before returning to base.

Speaking about the rescue Thomas

Davis, Clifden RNLI Coxswain commended both lifeboat crews saying; “The storm conditions and the distance we travelled today made for a challenging rescue, but this is what we train for, and I’m happy we were able to bring this sailor back to shore. I’d like to thank Achill Island RNLI for standing by us today which was a great support throughout the ten hours at sea.

“I’d remind everyone of safety advice during storm conditions; please exercise extreme caution around the coast and shore line. Always check the weather and the tides before going to sea and always call for help if you are in difficulty.”

Arranmore Rescue Stranded Walkers and Their Dog

On Saturday evening, September 16, Arranmore RNLI crew rescued three people and their dog who were stranded on Maghera Beach due to the rising tide.

Two men, a woman and their dog, were cut off by the tide on the rocks at Maghera Beach at Loughros Mor Bay when they called for help at 7.15 p.m. to Malin Head Coast Guard who alerted the all-weather lifeboat crew that was out on an exercise. The crew promptly diverted to the incident and upon assessing the situation, the crew of the Severn class lifeboat, *Myrtle Maud*, launched their smaller daughter inflatable Y-boat to access the water near the rock. Crew members Mickey McHugh and Kieran O’Donnell located the stranded walkers along the rocky shoreline of Loughros Mór Bay and removed them from the rocks.



Myrtle Maud passing Arranmore Head.

Rhoda Twombly, Secretary of Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann, the Islands' Federation, reports from the annual general meeting on Inishturk

Housing A Major Theme at Comhdháil AGM

Inishturk, Co Mayo, hosted to the 2023 Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann AGM. Such a beautiful place, full of flowers, sea views, small, tidy harbours and places to swim, walk or just enjoy Nature. The welcome here to friends and visitors alike is truly special while the hilly roads are something else – they add to the spectacular views, but you'd best bring your hiking boots!



Housing on islands was one of the major themes as was the newly published all-government policy document *Our Living Islands* and Action Plan.

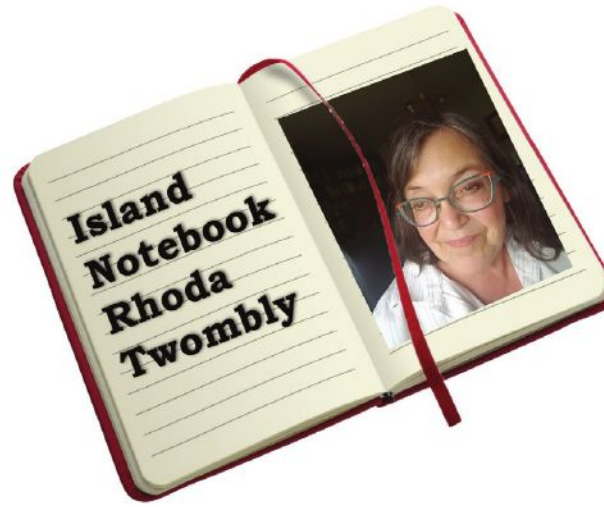
Bairbre Nic Aongusa, Assistant Secretary for Community Development in DRCD, spoke on the new islands policy document, the first since 1996. This is a 10-year policy supported by 3-to-4-year action plans. It is a "living document" and can be added to as needed. It is based on five primary goals: revitalising levels of population, diversifying economies, improving health and well-being services, empowering all island communities and building "smart" sustainable futures.

With an ultimate goal of enabling more people to live, work and raise their families on the offshore islands, many intertwined factors come into play. Nic Aongusa noted that there needs to be more quality employment – with high-speed broadband for the islands being

key to both attracting new businesses and allowing more islanders to work remotely. Broadband technology is also key to providing new opportunities in education.

The pilot e-health project on Clare Island will open doors in terms of access to health care for all islanders – not to mention technology that allows mainland doctors to track the health of their patients on islands.

As the lack of affordable, available housing is a huge block to the offshore islands' sustainability, Minister Humphrey's Department granted a 20% increase to the vacant and derelict property grant bringing it to €60,000 for vacant island properties and €80,000 for derelict island sites. It is recognised that planning is a huge issue with regard to building homes on islands and it is encouraging that Minister for Housing Darragh O'Brien has pledged that the draft of the new national planning document will expressly address the offshore island situation.



Comhdháil
Oileán
na

hÉireann
Irish Islands Federation

Over the years there has been huge investment in infrastructure and significant improvement to access facilities for both islanders and visitors. But this cannot be considered a static situation and further investment is necessary in piers, slipways and roads to both repair damage caused by weather conditions and, at times – neglect, as well as improving access possibilities. The National Development Plan allows for investment in piers (for example, work on the Inis Oirr pier has finally gone to tender) and road works have been successful through local schemes (LIS). Additionally, island amenities (walking trails, community centres, playgrounds, etc) have seen improvements and, vitally, funding through CLÁR, LIS and the rural regeneration scheme will be ring-fenced.

It is encouraging that a monitoring Committee for the island policy will include island representatives and will be convened before the end of October. The importance of on-going community input, two-way conversations on all challenges and inclu-

sion of islanders and their organisations is apparent in the policy document and action plan. Nic Aongusa stated that it is vital for Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann continue to bring islanders' concerns to the Department which will continue to support Comhdháil's work.

Aodán Mac an Mhíle, Principal Officer of the Islands Section (DRCD) detailed the objectives, outcomes and Actions within the policy and action plan. These strategic objectives were "identified by islanders themselves as of key importance for the sustainable future of their communities". These 5 objectives are broad-based and to some feel very aspirational:

1. Halt the population decline on islands: If successful they will change the future outcome for the offshore islands: "in collaboration with island communities, create the conditions that will encourage young people to remain on, or move to, the islands to live, work and raise families." This needs to

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Be part of the 'Community of the Sea' with Maritime Ireland



(Standing) Judith Gilbert, Marian Uí Chonghaile, Máirín Ní Chonghaile, Tomas MacPháidin, Rhoda Twombly, Aisling Moran, Bairbre Nic Aongusa, Aodán Mac an Mhíle, Catherine Connolly, TD. (Sitting) Bríd Ní Chonghaile, Máire Uí Mhaoláin, Cathy Ní Ghóill.

include improvement to the housing situation, planning changes and buy-in by the four county councils involved.

2. Encourage broadening of the island economy: Delivery of high-speed broadband is vital in this. Recognise and encourage the agri-sector, crafts and design,

3. Enhancement of health and well-being – this includes improved access to health, emergency and environmental waste services,

4. Empower Island Communities – giving islanders and their committees a voice and mechanisms through which their opinion will be considered. For example, having a dedicated Islands seat on the LCDCs and other regional/national committees. And finally –

5. Build “smart” sustainable futures: the use of proven and new technologies plus the islander’s innate knowledge of their home islands needs and environment to secure stronger overall sustainability into the future.

While the policies and action plan are sound in theory, their success relies heavily on the buy-in by all Government departments and the four County Councils involved. Islanders in general are willing to “give the plan a chance,” but will be anticipating positive actions (Donegal, Mayo, Galway, and Cork). Ring-fenced funding is a very positive step as is the inclusion of island consideration in the draft national planning guidelines.

Weak points of the policy are noted by stakeholders. There is scant mention of the maritime and fisheries sectors – a hugely noticeable omission for an islands’ action plan. Seamus Bonner of IIMRO asked how the fisheries groups could input into the action plan to strengthen the fisheries/marine section. This could be addressed through the Monitoring Committee, answered Mac an Mhíle.

Education policy was also seen as weak. Both Tomás MacPháidín (GRET) and Tuuli Rantala (Inishbofin Development Co) had serious reservations about the plan. MacPháidín noted that: “The National Plan for Islands has very limited ambition regarding developments for Irish Islands, particularly so regarding Education Sector developments 2023-2033. The Plan suggests only one significant education sector improvement over the 10-year period and focuses on existing supports to Island Schools and other schools. The proposed improvement is that Island Post-primary schools would have 2.0 whole-time equivalent teachers (WTEs) ex-quota in addition to allocations that all schools receive based on pupil numbers. This is a small improvement on the current allocation of 1.5 WTEs ex quota, which is in place since Department of Education response to Oireachtas Committee Report 2018, following a 10-year campaign by island schools (prior to 2018 it was 1.0WTE island specific allocation).” Ms Rantala noted that there was nothing in the plan that included second-

ary schools on the offshore islands. The reply was that this was open to discussion, but they didn’t want to be “unrealistic” about providing secondary education on the islands. However, the Department would be happy to discuss any solution the islanders would bring to them.



Bairbre Nic Aongusa (DCRD), Mary Helena O’Toole (Inishturk Development), Fionn Kidney (Inishturk Community Club), Aodán Mac an Mhíle (DCRD).

It was emphasised that each Government Department made their own contribution to the policy. The success of this policy will lie in the action and involvement of all Departments. With regard to education there appears to be a disconnect between the policy and solutions to challenges, said Coláiste Naomh Éinne principal Mícheál Ó Cúláin, while Mairéad Ní Fhátharta, Principal of Coláiste Naomh Eoin made the point that “if you want people to return to the islands you must have adequate schools.” Once again it appears that Government is taking the “one size fits all approach” – that an area’s catchment area must total 600 for a secondary school to be developed. This simply won’t happen on the offshore islands.

Deputy Catherine Connolly (Independent, Galway West) summed-up the urgency of the situation on the offshore islands: “This policy must be based on the recognition of the emergency of the situation (on the islands) and needs to be stronger and more specific.”

Housing Survey Recommendations

Comhdháil Oileáin na hÉireann has recognised housing as one of the most serious impediments to the sustainability of the offshore islands. To provide hard data on the situation, researchers from University College Cork who had previously analysed the housing situation on the West Cork islands, were set the task of surveying islanders across the four counties on their own housing needs and expectations and analysing the data. The results are in “Ireland’s Offshore Islands: Housing Needs Survey” by Dr Conor Cashman and Dr Siobhan O’Sullivan.

It outlines five key recommendations supported by their findings:

1. Island specific action plan with key targets/metrics

2. Community-led Housing Association/Approved Housing Body,

3. Advisory/Input role to National Policy Formation on Planning Guidelines,

4. Advisory/Input role to National Policy Implementation on Vacant Homes, and;

5. Ongoing Research and Community Engagement.

Cashman and O’Sullivan are very clear in their conclusions: “The information provided by respondents to this survey also shows a clear wish by full-time residents to remain on the islands, a desire by those previously living on the islands to return, and a cohort of people wishing to move to the islands for the first time. In all these situations, access to affordable and suitable housing is crucial. Island communities cannot be sustained without a specific housing policy that recognises the particular challenges islands face. The creation of long-term secure, affordable, available housing (whether to buy or to rent), is essential to fulfilling people’s needs as identified in the survey and to maintaining and building resilient, vibrant, and sustainable communities on Ireland’s offshore islands.”

The benefits of this solid piece of research are recognised but it is imperative that all relevant Departments and County Councils seriously address the housing crisis on offshore islands particularly as the future life of the islands depends on proper housing availability. Ring-fencing of funds

is vital, housing solutions tailored to individual island’s needs and continued (perhaps increased) financial support for renovating and building homes.

All present at the Comhdháil AGM applauded the depth of research and strength of the recommendations. But, as stated by Deputy Connolly, the good work will mean nothing if all involved do not address the existential threats to the survival of island communities.

There will be more discussion on the housing report when it is formally launched, along with consideration of the recommendations and possible actions for all the islands. It will be of huge importance to be included in the National Policy Formation on Planning Guidelines as this will greatly impact building on the islands.

As the winter approaches there is plenty of work to be done to see that island policies are acted on and ring fenced, that solutions to housing deficits are investigated, that island stakeholders are included in the National Policy Formation on Planning Guidelines so that we see glimmers of increased sustainability.

All Ireland Fisherman’s Golf



50 teams competed in the Patrick McClenaghan memorial golf competition at Greencastle Golf Club raising much needed funds for the Irish Cancer Society. An enjoyable days golf and craic was had by all. With the course in splendid condition and ideal weather conditions and a very competitive field scoring was always going to be keen. The MC Lubricants team were the winners of the team event with a fantastic score of 100 points, 3 points behind on 97 points was the team from the Deirdre, while the Green Isle team came third with 95 points. In the individual section open to non fishermen it was a double for the Bonner family with Paul winning the gents section with a fantastic score of 46 points and wife Anne followed winning the ladies section with 38 points.

Pictured above is Owenie Gallagher from the Neptune who won the coveted Patrick McClenaghan trophy after many attempts with 41 points, taking the trophy back to the Rosses for the first time since the inception of the competition. He is pictured receiving the trophy from Jimmy Hegarty.

2024 will be the 10th anniversary of the All Ireland Fisherman’s Golf competition and to date no person has won the trophy more than once. The race is on to see who can claim that accolade.

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IRISH WHALE AND DOLPHIN GROUP IWDG NEWS

30 years of the Shannon Dolphin Project are recalled by Simon Berrow, Chief Executive of the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group

The Shannon Dolphin Project is 30 years old this year. The IWDG first headed out on 2 May 1993 from Carrigaholt, Co Clare on the Loop Head Peninsula looking for bottlenose dolphins in the Shannon Estuary. The pilot project was being run through the West Clare Fishermen's Co-operative and funded by Shannon Development and the driver was to explore the feasibility of establishing dolphin-watching in the estuary as a marine tourism product.



Leaping trio of bottlenose dolphins. Photo Simon Berrow, IWDG

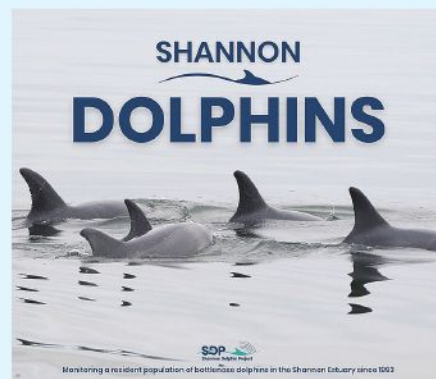
30 years on we now know that the bottlenose dolphins are largely resident in the estuary, number around 140 individuals and are genetically unique compared to bottlenose dolphins found elsewhere in Ireland. It is an important calving area with around 7 calves per annum. Calf mortality is 11% in their first year but if you reach maturity you have a 95% survival rate year on year. The estuary was designated as a Marine Protected Area for bottlenose dolphins under the EU Habitats Directive in 2000.

Dolphin-watching became well-established in the early 2000s, with two purpose built boats carrying out around 400-500 trips per year from the ports of Carrigaholt and Kilrush in Co Clare. Dolphin-watching from north Kerry was not successful due to the lack of secure non-tidal harbours. At its peak an estimated 20-25,000 people went out to see the dolphins each year and dolphin-watching was not only an important contributor to the local economy but a flagship for west and County Clare

For the first 28 years there was very little major new pressures on the estuary. However progress towards the planned economic development of the Shannon Estuary are advancing fast, including the transition of Moneypoint Power Station to an Atlantic Green Energy Hub supporting offshore renewables, the expansion of Foynes Port and the proposed Shannon Technological and Energy Park in north

Kerry. The IWDG have always advocated an All-Estuary monitoring approach with a long-term (at least 10 years) vision and associated conservation objectives. A seminar to share our knowledge and explore how to support economic development without degrading the conservation status of the estuary is to be held in Limerick in October.

The development of the Shannon Dolphin Project, the knowledge gained, personal reflections and a delve into potential futures is presented in a new book published by the IWDG. Production of the *Shannon Dolphins: Monitoring a resident population of bottlenose dolphins in the Shannon Estuary since 1993* was funded through the Local Biodiversity Action Fund and launched in late September by Minister Malcolm Noonan at the Shannon Dolphin Centre in Kilrush.



The book is available online at iwdg.ie priced €25 + €6 p&p inside Ireland.

www.iwdg.ie

Staff at Ireland's Marine Agencies Hooked On Angling

The Annual Inter Agency Sea Angling Challenge is back! Now in its 22nd year, the 2023 Challenge took place in Clew Bay, Co. Mayo on Friday 8th September.



Michael Hennessey and Micheal Pattern both IFI and Joe Cooney, Marine Institute

The yearly event began in 2001 as an idea from staff of the Marine Institute and Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI). These friends and colleagues have been a part of the organising team since inception, which has helped ensure participants have consistently high quality angling options in the selected competition areas.

In addition to the relaxing hook and line fishing that takes place, the aims of the Angling Challenge are:

- Providing an informal networking event
- Increasing and improving awareness of sea angling (particularly for newer staff of the agencies)
- Providing opportunities to discuss issues within the sport

Patricia Orme, Director of Corporate Services at the Marine Institute commented, "The annual angling challenge is a fantastic way for staff from multiple Irish marine agencies to build connections, and learn more about the area of angling, all while taking part in some friendly competition. We hope to see the event continue for many more years."

The social and educational event allows anglers to enjoy the productive marine waters off the coast of Ireland. In recent years, teams have included current and former staff from Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) River Basin Districts, the Marine Institute and Sea Fisheries Protection Agency (SFPA). They have also been joined over the years by teams from Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) and the Loughs Agency.



SS Constitution in Boston Harbour. Some of the Beara visitors who made a recent trip to Boston (read more in our Castletownbere News on page 25). Peadar Murphy, Natalie O'Meara, Mary Harrington, Sean Cronin, Yvonne Power, and Mike Dwyer from Boston but originally from Eyeries, Beara. Photo courtesy Anne Marie Cronin Photography

International Fishing and Maritime News

High Seas Treaty Signed

The High Seas Treaty, also known as the agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction, was signed in New York on the margins of the United Nations High Level Week in September.

The EU and several countries signed the Treaty which provides for “the common governance” of about half of the Earth’s surface and 95% of the oceans. Its terms promote equity and fairness, target environmental degradation, fight climate change and are intended to prevent biodiversity loss in the High Seas.

It is described as “a historic achievement” complementing the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides the legal framework under which all human activities in the ocean take place. The text of the treaty was agreed in March 2023 and formally adopted on 19 June, by consensus, at UN Headquarters in New York.

It will enter into force after 60 ratifications by signatories. Once ratified, the Treaty will allow the establishment of marine protected areas in the High Seas at global level, to “safeguard the oceans from human pressures to reduce climate change and protect biodiversity. The Treaty addresses a glaring gap in ocean protection, as only about 1% of the high seas are currently protected,” a UN statement announcing the signing said.

“It sets a framework for a fair and equitable sharing of monetary and non-monetary benefits from marine genetic resources, for capacity building and transfer of marine technologies to developing countries, as well as a voluntary fund to support developing countries to achieve UN Sustainable Development Goal 14 on ‘Life Below Water’.”

World Trade Organisation to Curb Fish Subsidies?

The World Trade Organisation appears to be moving towards

curbing subsidies which contribute to overfishing.

At a meeting last month members were reported to have expressed their support for the drafting of a text which would outline how this could be done. More discussions are expected this month.

Small Fish Catches ‘Unsustainable’ Claim

The marine conservation organisation, Oceana, has called on Northeast Atlantic countries to “improve management of catches of small fish, claiming that only ‘one-in-six’ forage fish populations in the Northeast Atlantic is sustainably exploited and in a healthy state.

“Many marine species – from mammals and seabirds to commercially important fish – depend on forage fish such as sandeel, sprat and herring as a primary source of food,” it said in a commentary which stated that

Northeast Atlantic countries are fishing these species at “unsustainable levels.”

Oceana stated that it had analysed 32 forage fish populations and “only a fraction is sustainably exploited and in a healthy state. The rest it claims, are either subject to overfishing, at worryingly low abundance levels, or their state is unknown due to data limitations.”

Trinidad / Tobago Given ‘Red Card’ by EU Over Illegal Fishing

The European Commission has put the global value of illegal fishing at €10-20 billion Euros per year. Between 11 and 26 million tonnes of

fish are caught illegally every year, corresponding to at least 15% of world catches, it said when issuing a decision to identify the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago as a non-cooperating country in the fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, giving it a ‘red card’.

The listing follows “lack of progress by the country in addressing serious shortcomings despite the support of the EU to Trinidad and Tobago under the IUU dialogue, both in relation to the revision of the legal framework and in monitoring, control and surveillance, the country did not make sufficient progress to satisfy the requirements under the IUU legislation. Notably, Trinidad and Tobago did not enact an adequate legal framework regulating the activities of the national fishing fleet in and beyond waters under national jurisdiction nor the activities of third countries’ fishing vessels in national ports.”

Other “persistent shortcomings” have been identified by the EU as “lack of adequate control over the national fishing fleet and the foreign fishing fleets calling to port in the country as well as the lack of necessary measures for the cessation and prevention of IUU fishing activities. The EU is the world’s biggest importer of fisheries products. Fighting IUU fishing is part of the EU’s actions under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is the EU’s contribution to ending IUU fishing and to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, sea and marine resources. IUU fishing is one of the most serious threats to the sustainable exploitation of living aquatic resources, jeopardising the very foundation of the Common Fisheries Policy and the EU’s international efforts to promote better ocean governance. IUU fishing also represents a major hazard to the marine environment, the sustainability of fish stocks and marine biodiversity.”

Portuguese Would Pay More for Fish with Omega 3

The OmegaPeixe project in Portugal to produce fish with an optimized Omega-3 level aims to encourage the production of turbot and sea bass with levels of Omega-3 recommended by the World Health Organisation. It has carried out an online survey which found that seven out of ten Portuguese consumers would pay more for fish enriched with Omega-3.

The study work was done by B2E – Blue Bioeconomy CoLAB (B2E CoLAB). It said that 69.3% of people stated a willingness

to pay more for fish enriched with this nutrient. The results revealed a significant interest in buying fish enriched with Omega-3. Of 817 people surveyed living in Portugal, 30.7% were not willing to pay more than the normal price. Of the 69.3% willing to pay more for fish enriched with Omega, 37.6% were willing to pay an extra euro and 35.1% an extra 50 cents. 15.4% would pay €1.50 more and 12% €2 or more.

Mowi to Test Electric Barriers Against Sea Lice

Mowi has announced that it has agreed a deal with Norwegian company, Harbor, to test their new technology aimed at protecting farmed salmon against sea lice.



The preventive measure, Harbor Fence, is a low-voltage electric barrier that prevents sea lice from entering the salmon cages. The system will be used at Mowi’s Rogne site, in the Møre and Romsdal region of Norway for trialling.

UK Labour Support for Scottish Salmon Farming

“It is the job of government to ensure the continued success of Scottish salmon, facilitating sustainable growth with animal welfare remaining a top priority,” according to the UK Labour Party’s Shadow Scotland Secretary, Ian Murray, after a visit to Scotland’s Loch Roag salmon farm on Lewis, in the Western Isles.



Salmon farming provided an “immense contribution” to the Scottish economy and “crucial” support for livelihoods, he said. “As the UK’s largest food export, Scottish salmon makes an immense contribution to our national economy. In some remote coastal areas, the jobs created by the local salmon farm are the only reason that shops, restaurants and other businesses are viable.”



Belgian vessel 'Den Hoop' at its "Home Port" of Cork - Photo courtesy Brian Motyer

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news from Castletownbere

Helen Riddell



Father and Son Owen and Paddy O'Sullivan and Rusty the dog on the pier in Castletownbere before heading to sea on the Dillon Owen II. Picture: Anne Marie Cronin Photography

Castletownbere Coast Guard

The Castletownbere Coast Guard team were recently presented with their two hundred year commemoration wreck token from the Coastguard Units Support Manager Niall Ferns and South West Sector Manager Damien Kelleher. The Irish Coast Guard celebrated its two hundredth anniversary last year and as part of the commemorations the Irish Coast Guard have issued 1,000 proof of service wreck tokens to its volunteers. Congratulations are extended to coast guard team members Pauliina Kaupila who received a 20 year service medal and to Chris Muijzert who received a 10 year service medal.

Cancer Connect Fundraiser

Vince Power, from Castletownbere, is fundraising to support the invaluable service which Cancer Connect West Cork provides. Following his own diagnosis, Vince travelled from the Beara Peninsula to Cork for treatment five days a week for seven weeks. He is forever indebted to their service and especially to the drivers and other passengers for their compassion and encouragement.

To raise funds for Cancer Connect Vince

has organised a 5k walk in Bere Island on Saturday October 14th, meeting at the Pontoon at 10.00am, before boarding the ferry at 10.30am. On returning to the pontoon if anyone wishes to walk from the Pontoon to Castletownbere, the Fire truck will lead the group. That night at 8.00pm, there will be a night of songs and music by Pat Higgins in MacCarthy's Bar, Castletownbere where there will be a raffle for a hamper and numerous spot prizes. Donation boxes will be available during both events and raffle tickets can be purchased from MacCarthy's Bar. All the proceeds will be donated to Cancer Connect.

For further information on both events contact 089 4900751, for further details on Cancer Connect see www.cancerconnect.ie

Beara Tourism Boston Commemoration

A celebration to mark the 300th anniversary since the first emigrant left the Beara Peninsula bound for New England took place in Boston USA in late September. In 1723, John Owen O'Sullivan from Beara emigrated to Berwick, Maine. His sons would make their mark on their new home, with all four fighting in the Revolutionary War. His son James would go on to become the Governor of Massachusetts, another son John, would become Governor of New Hampshire. In a coincidence, the current

Governor of Massachusetts, Maura Healey, can also trace her ancestors to the Beara Peninsula.

A week of festivities to mark the anniversary took place in Boston led by the Boston Beara Society and Beara Tourism with support from both Cork and Kerry County Councils. The Boston Beara Society was established in 1995 to promote and celebrate the history, art and music of the Beara Peninsula and achievements of its people in their new home in the USA.

The events included receptions at the Massachusetts State house with the Senator and Dean of the Massachusetts Senate Marc R Pacheco and at Boston City Hall with City Council President Ed Flynn. Kelly Loughren, the granddaughter of Albert Sullivan, one of the five Sullivan brothers who lost their lives in World War Two and whose ancestors hailed from Adrigole in Beara and for whom the US Naval destroyer USS The Sullivans was named in their honour, hosted an event on board the USS Constitution museum and ship in Boston harbour and was herself elected as the new chieftain of the O'Sullivan Clan and presented with the chieftain chain.

Christmas Newsletters

Castletownbere Development Association are calling on all groups and organisations as well as anyone who held any events

throughout the year to submit articles and photos for the Castletownbere Christmas Newsletter. Articles and photos should be sent to ctbannualnewsletter@gmail.com The closing date for submissions is Friday October 14th.

Bere Island Projects Group will be publishing the annual Christmas Newsletter for 2023 and are seeking contributions. The deadline is Friday October 27th 2023 and items can be emailed to bereconservation@gmail.com or dropped into the Projects Group Office.

The deadline for the Eyeries Parish Newsletter is October 20th and submissions can be sent to eyeriesnewsletter@gmail.com, dymnadaly1@gmail.com or norele-neodwyer@yahoo.com

Caha Centre

The Beara Community Gathering will be held on Friday October 13th in the Berehaven Golf Club from 12.30pm with music by One for the Road. The cost will be €10 per person. To book contact 027 60909 027 70998. The event is supported by the HSE. Fachtna O'Donovan will give a talk on Beara Casualties 1916-1923 Forgotten Stories of the Revolutionary Years for the Ardgroam, Lauragh and Tuosist's Men's Groups in the Lauragh Community Centre on Thursday October 5th at 8.00pm.

news from the **Ports**
editor@marinetimes.ie

Launch of the Substation at Dublin Port Including the City's 18th Century Sea Wall Goes on Permanent Display to the Public

The Substation at Dublin Port, where part of the city's 18th century sea wall was discovered has been officially opened. It now goes on permanent display to the public at this new interpretive centre, part of Dublin Port's distributed museum for the city.



All hands on deck as Adam Roche, 9, and Everly Whelan, 9, of St. Joseph's Co-Ed Primary School launch Dublin Port Company's new venue the Substation with Minister for Public Expenditure Paschal Donohoe TD. The Substation allows the public to view through a glass floor the 18th century sea wall which gives the East Wall its name. The display is the latest addition to Dublin Port's distributed museum, a key part of Masterplan 2040's strategic objective to integrate the Port and the City.

The redbrick Substation, built in the early 20th century, which is located on the corner of East Wall Road and Alexandra Road, once played a pivotal role in the early electrification of Dublin Port. The building has been expertly restored and reimagined by the team at Dublin Port - with the help of Dunwoody & Dobson and Darmody Architecture - as a modern interpretive centre that will play a central role in telling Dublin Port's story to audiences today.

During refurbishment works on site, part

of the city's original sea wall was discovered running underneath the Substation. The 18th century sea wall once served to protect the East Wall from flooding and was a catalyst for the North Lotts reclamation of centuries ago. Dublin Port, together with a multidisciplinary team has worked to preserve and expose the sea wall underneath a glass floor inside the building.

The display will become the latest addition to Dublin Port's distributed museum, a key part of Masterplan 2040's strategic



Pictured (left to right) at the launch on Thursday, 31st August at Lir, the National Ocean Test Facility, is Helen O'Keefe, ESB Planning & Strategy Manager, John Carlton, Engineering & Port Services Manager at Shannon Foynes Port Company, Ronan O'Flynn, ESB Programme Director for Green Atlantic @ Moneypoint, and Dr Jimmy Murphy, Funded Investigator in MaREI and Senior Lecturer in the School of Engineering in UCC.

objective to integrate the Port with the City. When complete, the redbrick substation museum display will be part of a 6.2km cycle and pedestrian route linking port, maritime and industrial heritage landmarks and vistas from Dublin's Docklands through the Dublin Port estate and overlooking Dublin Bay.

The Liffey-Tolka Project recently acquired its final grant of planning permission and will create a new transformative public realm along a 1.4 km dedicated cycle and pedestrian route linking the River Liffey with the Tolka Estuary through Dublin Port lands on the east side of East Wall Road, passing the Substation enroute to the final destination of the Tolka Estuary Greenway.

At the launch, there was a performance from ANU's Robbie O'Connor based off a short extract from the highly-acclaimed production *The Book of Names*, written and directed by Louise Lowe. The performance was a tribute to the dockers who would have gathered in their hundreds next to the Substation every day seeking work on the docks.

The launch of the Substation took place ahead of Culture Night. Dublin Port hosted four walking tours with tour guide Anthony Finnegan, a former Shore Engineer at Dublin Port, and Dublin City Council historian Hugh McGuinness. A plaque honouring Bindon Blood Stoney, one of Dublin Port's most pioneering port engineers, was also unveiled.

Finally, Dublin Port is proud to welcome *Solidarity: The Dockers of Dublin Port*, a new exhibition curated by The Little Museum of Dublin which comes to the Substation in November. *Solidarity* charts the story of one of Ireland's most fascinating industrial subcultures: the dockers.

Their story is one of hardship but also one of humour and resilience. From the great camaraderie to the insecurities of casual labour, and the button system of preferential hire to the introduction of containerisation, this colourful new exhibition charts the story of the dockers.

Minister for Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform, Paschal Donohoe, TD said: "I am delighted to be here today to officially open the Substation at Dublin Port, a remarkable project that represents the next step in making Dublin Port a true destination and enhancing the integration of our port with the city. I fondly recall the launch of the Diving Bell in 2015 and I commend Dublin Port Company for continuing to preserve and restore our city's history with this latest endeavour. The discovery of the 18th-century sea wall beneath this building is a testament to Dublin Port Company's continued commitment to preserving our rich maritime and built heritage.

"The Substation, with its expertly restored exterior and reimagined interior, will serve as an important interpretive centre, allowing us to share the captivating history of Dublin Port with today's audiences. It is not only a celebration of our past but also a bridge to our future as we work towards greater connectivity between the Port and the City."

Barry O'Connell, Chief Executive, Dublin Port Company, said: "Today marks

another significant milestone in our journey towards making Dublin Port a destination and achieving port-city integration. The opening of the Substation at Dublin Port, along with the discovery and preservation of the 18th-century sea wall, symbolises our commitment to bridging the past and the present.

"This redbrick Substation, once a hub of electrification, now stands as a modern interpretive centre, inviting the public to explore and celebrate Dublin Port's rich history.

"As we continue our efforts to connect the Port with the City, this interpretive centre becomes a vital part of Masterplan 2040, fostering a deeper connection between our maritime heritage and the community. With the upcoming exhibition 'Solidarity: The Dockers of Dublin Port,' curated by The Little Museum of Dublin, we celebrate the resilience and spirit of the dockers, adding another layer to the story of Dublin Port. We look forward to welcoming visitors to this unique space and sharing our port's rich history with them."

Rosslare Europort Named Ferry Port of the Year at European Ferry Shipping Summit

More than six-fold increase in European services post-Brexit amongst key factors in awards

Rosslare Europort in Co Wexford has been named European Ferry Port of the year at the 2023 European Ferry Shipping Summit in Malmo, Sweden.



It is the first time the award has been won by an Irish port, and it follows a transformational period in the port's development, with a more than six-fold increase in direct European sailings since Brexit, and record freight and passenger volumes being recorded.

Rosslare Europort was the only port in Ireland to record growth in the first six months of the 2023, on top of the record growth recorded over the previous two year period. Direct European services have increased from six to 38 over the past three years, and now directly connect Rosslare with ports including Bilbao, Cherbourg, Dunkirk, Le Havre and Zeebrugge

The award also reflects the further ambitious plans underway at Rosslare Europort, with investment projects at the port comprise Port, OPW and road infrastructure developments including:

- Rosslare Europort Masterplan, including port digitalisation: These works will reflect its status as Ireland's Gateway to Europe and will include new freight and passenger facilities, storage, export and import facilities, berth extension. Matching the port's physical transformation, a digitalisation of systems and operations is also

planned which will deliver a better, more effective and more efficient Port, to become Ireland's most advanced digitalised port

- Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Hub development, including an ORE purpose-built quay and berth, ORE quayside storage and pre-construction / up to 50 acres in area, navigable channel dredged down to a minimum of 9 metres depth, and management Control Centre & management offices and facilities

- Office of Public Works Project T7, to develop a permanent Border Control Post within the port, to provide the facilities and systems for all aspects of Border Control

- New TII N25 Rosslare Europort Access Road will ensure a better experience for port users and enhance quality of life for those living and working in the area by taking trucks out of the village and improving access and connectivity to the port.

In total, these developments will see a total of €350 million invested in the port and its environs.

Glenn Carr, Director Commercial Business Units with Iarnród Éireann – Port Authority for Rosslare Europort – said “this award is wonderful recognition for our team at Rosslare Europort who have transformed the port's fortunes in recent years. That team of course comprises our team of over 100 Rosslare Europort colleagues, but also our shipping customers, our service providers, the Irish logistics and haulage industries, and the crucial State agencies at the port. Our success has been built on a partnership approach, one that we will continue to apply as our ambitious expansion plans are delivered.”

ESB and Shannon Foynes Port Announce Support for Floating Offshore Wind Research at UCC

MaREI, the world-leading Science Foundation Ireland Research Centre at UCC, will carry out a phased study over the next two years with the aim to examine the use of wet storage to support floating offshore wind projects off Ireland's coast.

ESB and Shannon Foynes Port have announced a funding collaboration for a €250k study at MaREI, the SFI Research Centre for Energy, Climate and Marine at University College Cork (UCC), in the latest step towards helping Ireland to deliver floating offshore wind (FLOW) projects in the future.

Starting in September, the focus of the research will be to examine the requirements and identify potential sites for wet storage, which is the temporary offshore storage of floating offshore wind turbines in suitable areas prior to installation. This is a key requirement for facilitating floating offshore wind, which will be a fundamental technology in Ireland reaching its offshore renewable targets.

The research will take place over two phases. The first phase will consist of understanding the key conditions and con-

straints associated with the development and identification of suitable wet storage sites, while phase two will focus on the technical challenges of designing sites in terms of the optimum layout and mooring configuration. The aim of the study is to identify and inform considerations for the future FLOW industry that are required at an economic, environmental, societal and policy level in Ireland and also, to set a benchmark for best international practice through close academic and industry collaboration.

Ronan O'Flynn, ESB Programme Director for Green Atlantic @ Moneypoint, said: “We understand the importance that floating offshore wind projects are going to play in both Ireland achieving its ambitious renewable energy targets and ESB delivering on our commitment to reach net zero by 2040. Research such as this, carried out by our partners MaREI and supported by Shannon Foynes Port, will help the entire industry to better understand what is required for crucial wet storage facilities that will allow floating offshore wind projects to be delivered at scale.”

Pat Keating, CEO at Shannon Foynes Port, said: “Our partnership with the ESB on funding this research will help underpin understanding in the key area of wet storage, in which Shannon Estuary will be a major provider of as we go about harvesting the unprecedented opportunity for not just our region and state arising from floating offshore wind. Because of the estuary's existing deepwater ports at Foynes and Moneypoint, wet storage space and available land for large-scale industrial development, we are one of few locations in Europe that can manufacture floating turbines at the scale necessary for commercialisation.”

Dr Jimmy Murphy, Funded Investigator in MaREI and Senior Lecturer in the School of Engineering in UCC, said: “This project will be an important enabler for the emerging floating wind energy sector in Ireland and will allow strategic planning decisions to be made related to the efficient deployment of floating windfarms. MaREI has a track record of research and development in floating wind and welcomes this collaboration with ESB and Shannon Foynes Port to address the challenge of identifying potential wetstorage locations and optimising design layout.”

Ireland's offshore wind energy potential arising from our Atlantic seaboard winds is among Europe's leading renewable energy opportunities. With a maritime area more than seven times the size of its landmass, ideal wind conditions, and strategic location on the Atlantic Ocean's edge, floating offshore wind generation can deliver up to 30 gigawatts of energy by 2050 – six times more than current domestic electricity demand.

MaREI will provide the research expertise along with the various tools required for the study which is aligned with their core research principles. ESB and Shannon Foynes Port will provide funding support and industry knowledge for the study which is in line with ESB's Net Zero by 2040 strategy and Shannon Foynes Port's Vision 2041 masterplan.

Countdown for the Explorers Education Ocean Champion Awards

The Marine Institute is pleased to announce that eight primary schools have been shortlisted for the Explorers Ocean Champion Awards 2022-2023.

Patricia Orme, Corporate Services Director with the Marine Institute said that “the children's engagement and interest in the ocean is heartfelt and their work shows how looking after our ocean is truly meaningful for them. The children were eager to involve their local communities with understanding how the ocean affects us all and how our daily activities impact the ocean. The children's projects have all been inspirational providing us with a wealth of ideas as to how we can better engage our friends, families and communities in learning about the ocean,” Ms Orme added.

“The Explorers healthy ocean school projects also provide teachers with an opportunity to introduce thematic learning and supports the new Curriculum Framework covering a wide range of cross curricular activities,” explained Cushla Dromgool-Regan, of the Explorers Programme.

“The projects have included monthly beach cleans, school sea science fairs for parents and other classes in their schools, science experiments, building unique toys and games from recycled materials, sharing stories about their local marine biodiversity

and heritage, as well running campaigns to engage others in recycling rubbish, so it doesn't end up in the ocean”.

The national winner and finalists will receive special awards under the different categories where the schools have shown excellence and exceptional engagement with their subject material relating to Marine STEAM, Ocean Literacy and the Arts, SDGs & the Ocean, and Marine Outdoor education. The schools that have qualified as an Explorers Ocean Champion will receive specially designed certificates of achievement, recognising the work and commitment of the teachers and children that have taken part in the projects. The schools that have engaged in the Healthy Ocean Project will also receive a certificate of participation.

“We look forward to announcing the winners and to organising the presentation of plaques and certificates by the Explorers teams in the autumn to celebrate our healthy ocean,” Ms Orme said.

More information about the Explorers Education Programme is available at www.explorers.ie

SCHOOL FINALIST FOR AWARDS	PROJECT NAME
ARDFERT NATIONAL SCHOOL Station Road, Ardfert, Co Kerry	Sailing the Seas with Mini Marine
BROOKLODGE NATIONAL SCHOOL Brooklodge Glanmire, Co Cork	Healthy Oceans
SCOIL BHRÍDE SHANTALLA Shantalla Road, Galway	Sea School
SCOIL CAITRIONA JUNIOR RENMORE Renmore, Galway	Looking After Our Ocean
SCOIL CHIARAIN SPECIAL SCHOOL St Canice's Rd, Glasnevin, Dublin	Our Healthy Ocean
SCOIL NA CORÓINE MUIRE Ashford, Co Wicklow	What is in the 95% of Ocean we are yet to explore?
SCOIL MICHÍL NATIONAL SCHOOL Dún Gegán, Baile an Sceilg, Co Chiarraí	Scoil Mhichíl's Mini Marine Adventure
ST TERESA'S NATIONAL SCHOOL Castletown, Kilflyn, Co Kerry	Deep Sea Science Fair!

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Honouring Wooden Boatbuilding in Killybegs

A ceremony took place in Killybegs on Sunday 24th September, to commemorate the old craft of wooden boatbuilding there, and to pay tribute to those who had carried on that trade. An inscribed stone was erected and unveiled to honour the memory of those who worked in Killybegs Boatyard. A minute's silence was observed in memory of all the workers who had passed away down through the years. Members of the public joined relatives and friends of past and present boatyard personnel for the unveiling ceremony.

Pat Conaghan, who had joined the Boatyard as an apprentice in the days of wooden boats, gave a short talk on the history of the boatyard from its inception. He said: "The ceremony today is to raise a commemorative stone to mark the craft of wooden boatbuilding in Killybegs, and to remember the people who plied that trade. It is appropriate to mark their contribution to their local community.

"The stone was designed and executed by Brian Kerrigan of the Drumkeelan quarries, Mounthcharles. Inscribed on the stone is an outline of a 50 foot fishing boat, taken from one of the first drawings of Jim Stafford, who was designer for the boatyard from the mid 1940s. Stafford was an Arklow man, and he served as foreman in the boatyard for eight years.

"The first Boatyard began as part of the Killybegs Industrial School, founded by the Bishop of Raphoe, Dr Patrick O'Donnell at the urging of Father Michael Martin, parish priest of Killybegs. The boys of the School were taught farming, shoe-making, tailoring and boatbuilding. The Congested Districts Board (CDB) placed orders for boats with the School, and the first one was launched in 1899. Marine engines had not yet come on stream, so practically the only material required was timber. This was sourced at first from Galway, and later from John Gardener who had a steam sawmill near Mounthcharles. The boys, under an instructor, built about 40 vessels up to the First World War, when the effects of the war disrupted all aspects of life. Killybegs harbour was a British port, serving as a sub-

marine base, with two massive submarine support ships, the Platypus and the Vulcan, anchored there.

"Two large motor boats were launched from the Yard towards the end of this period when engines first became available.

"Following on from this, the upheavals during the period from 1919 into the early 1920s affected all business operations, and the Yard struggled for orders.

"The CDB was gone by 1922, and the Killybegs Yard was left to fend for itself for the first time. The manager of the Yard was always a clergyman, whose main task was managing the Industrial School itself. Although well intentioned, these men had no training in business matters, and were ill-suited to running a commercial operation such as boat building.

"Finally, our native government set up the Sea Fisheries Association (SFA), in 1930, and orders were placed with the boatyard for new boats. These were inshore craft up to 35 feet in length, when a better effort might have been made to provide larger vessels.

"The Second World War disrupted the industry as engines and other materials were very hard to get. The Yard came to a standstill, and was purchased by the SFA. They began to turn out wooden boats of 50 feet in length, which were designed by Jim Stafford, A.R.I.N.A., already mentioned. The first boat was launched in 1948, and the Yard turned out an uninterrupted run of increasingly large vessels up to 1980.



The organising committee pictured at the unveiling of the stone. (l-r): Joey Cunningham, Eugene Byrne, Lee Mooney, Michael O'Boyle, Brian McGilloway, Patrick Gallagher and Pat Conaghan. (Inset photos): Michael O'Boyle, Barry O'Hara and Patrick Gallagher. Pat Conaghan and Joey Cunningham.

During this time Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), replaced the SFA, and expanded the premises and workforce to meet the demands of the fishermen. Jim Stafford had died in 1968, and Cyril Chisholm, BIM's Naval Architect, modernised the existing boat plans, and designed some of the largest wooden vessels to be built in the country. In the private sector the Meevagh Boatyard had been re-opened, and begun turning out first class wooden boats in the largest sizes. The general opinion among fishermen was that the boats from these two Donegal yards were untouchable in terms of design, quality and seaworthiness.

"The last wooden boat, the 86ft Dermot Anne, was launched from Killybegs in 1980 for Danny Gallagher of Bruckless. Following on from this the Yard was leased to private firms who turned out a few fine steel vessels. Those companies did not stay the course, and the Yard closed, with a massive loss of employment. It was alleged that a significant amount of asset stripping was carried out at that time. The **Donegal Democrat** reported that the loss of those jobs was a 'severe blow to the Killybegs Credit Union'. Following this, BIM sold the entire facility in 1984.

"The late Micheal Mooney, who had started in the Yard as an apprentice over 20 years previously, was the purchaser. He began recruiting a workforce, and turned the Yard into a successful commercial enterprise. Very sadly, he died at a relatively young age, but he had prepared his family to further modernise and expand the operation. It was to become the leading build and repair facility in the country.

THE CREDIT UNION

"Killybegs Credit Union, begun 56 years ago, had a very close relationship with the Boatyard. It was set up by BIM, and its foundations were laid by the Boatyard staff. It is interesting to see how it began.

"In the summer of 1967 the local BIM agent, Michael Mitchell, decided the largest fishing port in Ireland would be well suited to a Credit Union. He met John Hume, who had started the Derry Credit Union, who advised him on the necessary procedures. Public meetings were held in Killybegs, and there was a strong attendance by Boatyard

personnel. These included Des Houlihan, Pat Rowan, Josie Murrin, Pat Conaghan, and Michael Mitchell, the latter not actually on the staff of the Yard.

"The first deposits were lodged by October, and Killybegs Credit Union was launched.

"However the weather-dependent and seasonal nature of the fishing in those years did not provide the steady wages required for regular savings. And so the Boatyard with its weekly wage packets, kept the Credit Union afloat in its early years. New factories such as Bridport-Gundry and Fimarex were established at this time, and they also helped.

"The office staff of the Yard played a vital role by encouraging the employees to join the C.U. and agree to deductions from their pay as weekly deposits. But for the persistence of Boatyard staff and Credit Union founding members Mary Lafferty, Pat Rowan, Des Houlihan, and Josie Murrin, it is doubtful if Killybegs Credit Union would have weathered the first years of its existence. Sean McGuinness of Killybegs Seafoods, also one of the founding members, was the first treasurer. During the following years the bond between the Boatyard and the C.U. was further strengthened by the continuous presence on the various C.U. committees of Boatyard staff, while the late Cathal Conaghan and Colm Cunningham held the office of chairmen.

"On behalf of our committee, I extend our thanks to the Mooney family, the owners of the Boatyard, for their co-operation in bringing this project to completion. Thanks also to Barry O'Hara, who liaised with the committee on behalf of the Yard owners, and to the Kerrigan brothers who provided us with such a handsome stone.

"Today's ceremony was all about the past, but the future lies in the hands of the young men and women driving this industry. In that respect we wish Mooney Boats many years of success."

The commemorative stone was then unveiled by the committee members, Michael O'Boyle, Lee Mooney, Eugene Byrne, Pat Conaghan, Joey Cunningham, Patrick Gallagher and Brian McGilloway.



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Bluemouth Rockfish (*Helicolenus dactylopterus*) in Irish Waters

Report by Declan Quigley

On 14th September 2023, the MFV Atlantic Freedom (S78) [Skipper: Peter Lynch] captured a Bluemouth Rockfish (*Helicolenus dactylopterus*) [BRF] while potting for lobster and crab in the Irish Sea off Howth, Co Dublin. The specimen weighing 550g and measuring 27cm total length (TL), was photographed prior to being released alive (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Bluemouth Rockfish (*Helicolenus dactylopterus*) captured & released by the MFV Atlantic Freedom off Howth, Co Dublin (14.09.2023).

This is the second Bluemouth Rockfish captured and released by the MFV Atlantic Freedom from the same area. The first specimen, weighing 386 g and measuring 29.3 cm TL was taken three years previously during early September 2020 (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. Bluemouth Rockfish captured by the Atlantic Freedom off Howth (September 2020) [Photo Declan & Luke MacGabhann]

Although Bluemouth Rockfish are common in deep off-shore waters along the west coast of Ireland, there are only two previous records from the Irish Sea. The first specimen, measuring 17.5 cm TL was captured in a trawl off Bradda Head, NW of Port Erin, Isle of Man during July 1966.

Two decades later, a second specimen weighing 670 g and measuring 32.5 cm TL, was captured on rod and line by Mr W. Moore (Carrickfergus) off 'The Maidens', Co Antrim during June 1987.

The Bluemouth Rockfish (also known as the Black-belly Rosefish) is a widespread bathy-demersal species, inhabiting continental shelves and upper slopes at depths of 50-1100m (Fig. 3). In the Western Atlantic it extends from Nova Scotia (Canada) southwards to Venezuela. In the Eastern Atlantic it extends southwards from Iceland and Norway to the Mediterranean and South Africa. The species gets its name from the distinctive blue-black colouration of the peritoneum in its mouth cavity (Fig. 4).

Bluemouth Rockfish are slow-growing (maximum length 50 cm @ 43 years of age) and late maturing (males mature

@ 26 cm & 15-16 years of age, and females @ 23 cm & 13 years). Based on its length, the current specimen was an adult, probably 13-16 years old.

During the early 1990s, there was a major influx of juvenile Bluemouth Rockfish into the northern North Sea. It is possible that some of this exceptional cohort may also have migrated into northern parts of the Irish Sea during the same period, and that the recent specimens recorded from Howth may represent a small residual isolated population of these stragglers.



Figure 4. Bluemouth Rockfish showing blue-black colouration inside the mouth (Photo Alan Pyne & Declan MacGabhann)

Since the early 1950s, Bluemouth Rockfish have been increasingly exploited throughout its range on both sides of the North & South Atlantic (Fig. 5). During 2021, a total of 3475 tonnes was landed. Five countries accounted for 92% of the landings: South Africa (38%), Spain (22%), Uruguay (17%), Portugal (9%), and France (6%). Irish vessels accounted for <2% (59 tonnes).

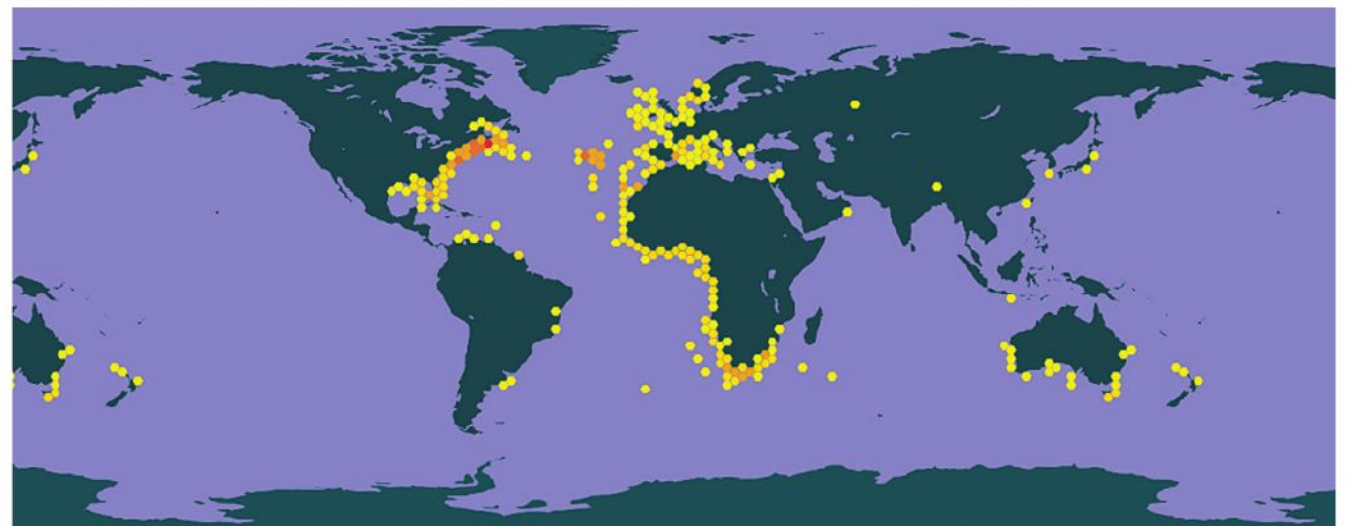
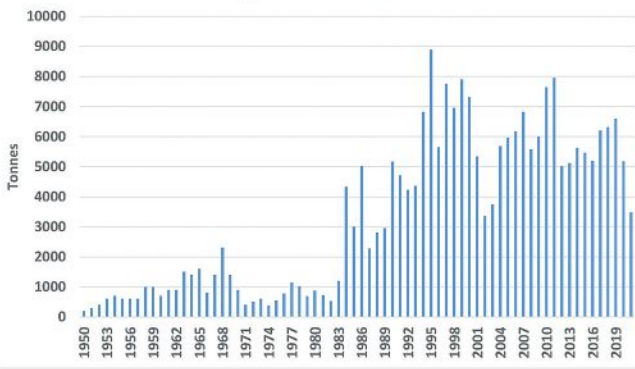


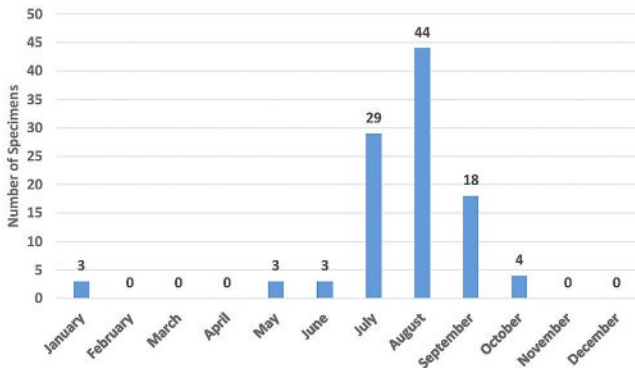
Figure 3. Global distribution of Bluemouth Rockfish (*Helicolenus dactylopterus*) [GBIF]

Figure 5. Annual Global Landings of Bluemouth Rockfish (FAO 1950-2021)



Since the mid-1990s, a growing number of pioneering anglers have been targeting Bluemouth Rockfish on seamounts and reefs (up to 40 km offshore) at depths of 100-200 m primarily off SW Ireland (Figs. 6-7).

Figure 8. Monthly frequency distribution of ISFC Bluemouth Rockfish (2002-2022; N=104)



Since 2002, a total of 104 specimen-size Bluemouth Rockfish (weighing ≥ 0.9 kg & measuring ≥ 38 cm TL) have been recorded by the *Irish Specimen Fish Committee* (ISFC). All of the specimens were recorded out of Caher-

civeen (76), Valentia (23) & Dingle (5), mainly during July, August & September (Fig. 8).

The total length and weight of the ISFC specimens ranged from 35-44 cm (mean 38.6) and 0.9-1.32 kg (mean 0.972) respectively (Fig. 9).



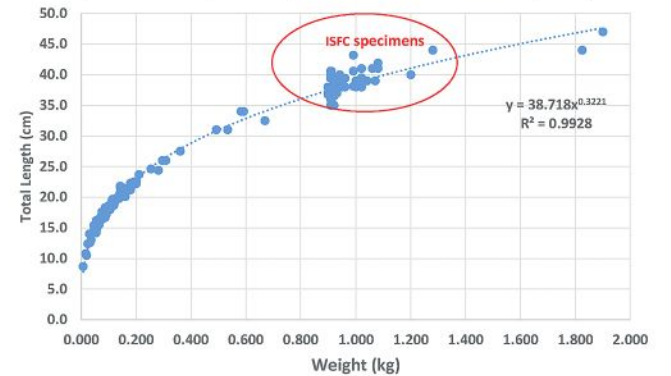
Figure 6. Specimen Bluemouth (910 g; 38 cm) from Foze Rocks, Dingle Bay, Co Kerry, January 2011 (Photo - Alan Pyne & Declan MacGabhann).

Figure 7. Bluemouth Rockfish from Foze Rocks, Dingle Bay, Co Kerry, January 2011 (Photo - Declan MacGabhann).



Although the current ISFC Rod & Line Record, weighing 1.32 kg, was captured by Sue Tait out of Caherciveen (Co Cork) during July 2008, larger specimens have been taken by commercial trawlers. During July 1990, a Bluemouth Rockfish weighing 1.9 kg (47 cm TL) was captured by the *MFV Philip Borum* (Grimsby) while trawling at a depth of 183 m west of Achill (Co Mayo). During June 1993, the *MFV Shannon* (Skipper: Michael Flannery, Dingle) captured a specimen weighing 1.825 kg (44 cm TL) while trawling at a depth of 240 m west of the Basket Islands (Co Kerry).

Figure 9. Total Length vs Weight of Irish Bluemouth Rockfish (N=155)



The UK Rod & Line Record, weighing 1.431 kg, was captured off Loch Shell, Stornoway (Outer Hebrides, Scotland) during 1976. The IGFA Rod & Line World Record, weighing 2.35kg, was captured off the Norfolk Canyon (Virginia, USA) during February 2009.

Declan is always interested in receiving reports about rarely recorded and unusual species in Irish waters (WhatsApp 087-6458485; declanquigley2021@gmail.com).

just around the next bend in the road



Around the coast of Ireland we are truly blessed with beautiful sights around every bend on our coastal roads such as the image above courtesy of Anne Marie Cronin Photography taken on the Beara Peninsula. Resting up for its next trip out is the 'PIARAS, A CHARA'. If you have a photo from around our coastline and of our coastal and fishing communities please do send it on. You can email us at editor@marinetimes.ie or WhatsApp to 087-7989582



John T heading out from Kilkeel. Photo courtesy Leslie Campbell

Conference Aims to Position Ireland as Centre of Excellence for Aquatech

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's seafood development Agency is hosting a conference next month that aims to position Ireland as the centre of excellence for aquatech. The inaugural Aquatech Business of the Year award is also being announced at the event.

The conference, being held in partnership with global aquaculture accelerator, Hatch, and supported by the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, will gather some of the leading experts in aquaculture including Kristen Virega, SVP Global Shrimp fishery, Neil Sims, Founder and CEO, Ocean Era and Jennifer Bushman, Sustainable Aquaculture Strategist and Communicator. BIM CEO, Caroline Bocquel is also among the key speakers.

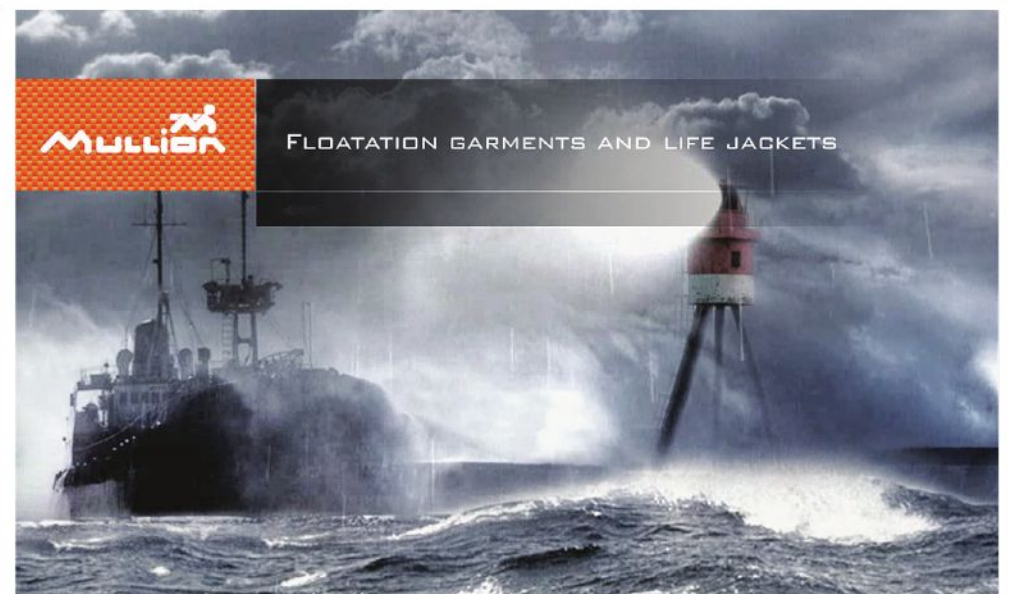
Aquatech can be defined as any technology enabling sustainable seafood farming. There are currently 62 aquatech companies operating in Ireland, employing almost

900 and with a combined turnover of €217 million.

This exclusive discussion and knowledge sharing opportunity will provide a platform for senior policy makers, aquaculture and tech sector thought leaders and investors to learn how Ireland can build its capabilities in this space.

'Aquatech – Ireland's Global Opportunity' is taking place at the Brehon Hotel in Killarney, Co Kerry on Thursday 19 October from 14:00 to 16:00 (Irish Standard Time). You can register to attend for free on eventbrite.ie (search for Aquatech)

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